DIGITAL JESUS: EVANGELISM IN A DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA DRIVEN CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

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This project examined the communication shift from print culture to digital culture, and the church's evangelistic response to millennials communicating in a digital and social media driven world. The research methodology came through an ethnographic study of the use of social media in worship, and a case study within the project context that incorporated findings from the ethnographic study to create a digital and social media communication strategy. Findings showed participants responded positively to using social media in worship, which confirmed the theory that digital communication is an effective medium to communicate and evangelize to those in the digital culture.

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I would like to acknowledge those who have played a significant role in the accomplishment of this Doctoral Project: United Theological Seminary, UTS Doctoral Committee, Dr. Thomas Boomershine, Dr. Lisa M. Hess, the UTS Biblical Storytelling in Digital Culture Focus Group, Fairborn United Methodist Church, the Fairborn and Beavercreek Starbucks, all the Research Study Participants, the authors and content curators for the materials used in the project and document, and finally all my friends and family who stood by and continued to encourage me throughout the process.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this doctoral project to John, Jackson and Claire. You three have sacrificed more than anyone will ever realize so that I could accomplish this. It was through your loving and encouraging words, the many conversations over late night cups of coffee, and those tiny hugs when I needed them that gave me the strength and ability to continue on. I love you more than any dedication can ever say. Thank you.

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ABBREVIATIONS

A.D.	Anno Domini
NIV	New International Version
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
MATT.	Gospel of Matthew
FUMC	Fairborn United Methodist Church
M.E.	Methodist Episcopal
UMC	United Methodist Church
Etc.	Et cetera

INTRODUCTION

Former CEO of Apple, Inc., Steve Jobs, was attributed with stating the following:

> Here's to the crazy ones, the misfits, the rebels, the troublemakers, the round pegs in the square holes…the ones who see things differently – they're not fond of rules…You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them, but the only thing you can't do is ignore them because they change things…they push the human race forward, and while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius, because the ones who are crazy enough to think that they can change the world, are the ones who do.[1]

The world needs some crazy world changers. In fact, the church needs some crazy world changers. The church needs individuals who are willing to take bold, and even crazy risks for the Kingdom. Some have viewed this doctoral project as slightly outside the box, and perhaps even a tad on the crazy side, because this project sought to review, and potentially even alter, the focus of the traditional church communication and evangelism culture. This project sought to create an alternative communication strategy and communication culture within the church towards the digital in hopes of finding new ways to approach evangelism through the use of digital and social media.

[1] Chelsea Pieroni, "20 Most Memorable Quotes from Steve Jobs," The Cheat Sheet, September 23, 2014, accessed December 16, 2014, http://wallstcheatsheet.com/stocks/20-most-memorable-quotes-from steve-jobs.html/?a=viewall.

One of the goals of the doctoral project was to bridge the gap between the ancient message of God[2] and the innovative use of digital communication, primarily focusing on the use of social media. Secondly, it was a goal of the researcher to examine the digital and social networking tendencies of those within the millennial generation, as this generation is the first generation to grow up in a predominantly digital culture.

Third, through observation and examination the researcher analyzed the effectiveness of using social media in worship as a means of deepening one's experience, and furthering the digital footprint of the gospel. Finally, this project sought to create strategies for fruitful and intentional evangelistic communication, conversation, and connection between the church and millennials without compromising who the church is as a people of God.

In order to achieve these goals it was important to include a few elements. Those elements included: a context analysis, biblical foundation, historical foundation, theological foundation, theoretical foundation and finally the project and data analysis. Additionally important are the various key terms that are used throughout the document. The definition of these terms can be found in the Glossary[3] located in the front matter of this document.

Chapter one outlines the overall ministry focus. Included in this chapter are the experiences and circumstances that led the researcher to explore the church's evangelistic response to millennials communicating in a digital and social media driven world. The exploration resulted from the communication shift from print culture to digital culture. The researcher details her decision to answer the quiet whispers from God to "go" as

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[2] See Chapter One, section heading titled Paradox for a more in-depth definition of this phrase.

[3] Glossary of Terms found on pages 160-171.

Jesus commanded his disciples at the end of the Gospel of Matthew. Also found in chapter one is a brief history of the Methodist movement led by John Wesley, and an analysis of Fairborn UMC, located in Fairborn, Ohio.

Chapter two outlines the biblical foundation for the overall project. The biblical foundation takes an in-depth approach in looking at the gospel of Matthew 28:16-20. The in-depth approach is focused around a performance criticism analysis. Key words, various audience addresses, sound mapping of the scripture, and scriptural passage are all outlined in chapter two as part of the processes of analyzing scripture from a performance criticism standpoint.

Chapter three provides the historical foundation for the project. The historical foundation includes the historical figures of Martin Luther and Johannes Gutenberg. Within the historical foundation analysis a brief history of the printing press is outlined as well as the connection that the printing press had to the Protestant Reformation. This analysis and foundation provide the background information describing the connection between the communication shift during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the communication shift that is happening within culture currently.

Chapter four outlines the theological foundation for the overall project. The foundation for evangelism is observed through viewpoints coming from theologian John Wesley. A brief look back into the life of John Wesley helps provide a basis for his theology of evangelism. Finally, chapter four outlines evangelism in the digital age and the need for continued growth in this area of ministry.

Chapter five outlines the theoretical foundation for the overall project as well as describes in detail the characteristics and tendencies of the millennial generation. Also, in the theoretical foundation, is a brief history of communication throughout the years, and an outline of the digital age, with an introduction to social media and its characteristics as a digital medium.

Finally chapter six outlines the project proposal, the research method used as well as the method used to collect data. The chapter also includes project description, analysis, overall findings and results. Final conclusions and a post-script are given towards the close of the document.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

The Lorax is one Dr. Seuss' best stories, one that most recently has been made into a children's movie. The Lorax project found at www.seusville.com stated:

> First published in 1971, the beloved tale The Lorax chronicles the plight of the environment and of the Lorax, an advocate who "speaks for the trees" against the greedy Once-ler. The story details the decline of the Truffula forest, the Swomee-Swans song, the Humming-Fish hummed, and the Brown Bar-ba-loots as the huge Thneed-making business of the Once-ler grows. As whimsical as all Dr. Seuss tales, The Lorax contains key messages regarding the destructive nature of deforestation yet highlights the positive roles that every individual can play in the fight against destructive forces.[1]

It was not the odd-named creatures or the attention to deforestation that stood out, but rather the last few pages of the book. After taking the time to explain his storied life, the Once-ler finds himself speaking to Ted, one of the main characters in the book.

The Once-ler is reflecting back on what happened with the Lorax. In this moment of reflection, he is somewhat remorseful that he did not take better care of what he had been given. The Once-ler, in his need to make his business and financial situation bigger and better, failed to save the forest and in turn ruined a beautiful place, with beautiful creatures. He gives Ted a seed, the very last Truffula seed of them all. He urges Ted to water the seed and treat it with care. He tells Ted to allow the seed to grow in the hopes

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[1] Dr. Seuss Enterprises, LLP, *The Lorax History*, accessed January 1, 2013, http://www.seussville.com/loraxproject/.

that more Truffula trees would blossom and bring back the Lorax, and all of his friends.[2] Then the Once-ler leaves Ted with one final message as Dr. Seuss writes, "UNLESS someone like you, cares a whole awful lot. Nothing is going to get better. It's not."[3]

There are countless opportunities for ministry in this world, and unless God's people are willing to go and do something about them, this world will continue down a very destructive and deadly path. We are called to walk into the messy and unorthodox situations of this world and respond to the call of, *unless*.

Unless; it is a word that is used as a conjunction or preposition within a sentence; connecting two or more ideas or phrases. As with other conjunctions or prepositions it probably gets overlooked most of the time, but there is a danger in overlooking the word, *unless*. *Unless* is conditional and action oriented. *Unless* means a decision is required: will the decision be to act, or will the decision be to remain silent and static? *Unless* usually involves thinking about all the aspects within a situation or circumstance, both positive and negative. *Unless* is a simple six-letter word, but one that carries much weight.

God has been whispering the word, *unless*, for a long time. The recognition of the whisper, however, has gone unnoticed, that is until now. From life circumstances and situations, an interest in music and athletics, the continual desire to learn as much as possible, and a passion to make things better than how they were found, various decisions have been made on hearing and recognizing the gentle whisper of, "Unless, someone like

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[2] Dr. Seuss *The Lorax* (New York, NY: Random House, 1971), 61.

[3] Ibid., 58.

you does this, nothing is going to get better."[4] Now to say that a single individual is solely responsible for completing a given task for the kingdom is quite absurd.

To be honest God has whispered, *unless*, to everyone when God called each of us to: "Go and make disciples."[5] However, even in the midst of doubting and running, hard and fast, from God's call, God positioned and placed me in situations that others may have turned away from. These situations have not been monumental, or necessarily world changing, but they have been life altering for all involved.

God called me to be a youth pastor to a group of kids that some had written off. God called me to bring a group together to form an alternative worship service that made the homeless, drug and alcohol addicted, prostitutes and any others whom society tossed aside feel welcome inside the walls of a church. God called me to stretch outside my comfort zone and pastor a church located across from a landfill. If the measurement of success was based on location alone, the church was doomed from the beginning. This church was struggling, and only by the grace of God, began to heal from past wounds and move forward.

Currently, God has positioned me as the associate pastor of a United Methodist church in Fairborn, Ohio. My time and energy are focused on leveraging the church's efforts towards ministry in a digital format to those living in the fast-paced digital and social media driven culture.

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[4] Adaptation of Dr. Seuss' quote from *The Lorax*. Dr. Seuss *The Lorax* (New York, NY: Random House, 1971), 58.

[5] Matthew 28:19 NIV.

In each of the places God called me, learning a new task was required. Whether that task was how to explain the scriptures to a group of teenagers, create a worship experience from the ground up, lead an entire church body into spiritual transformations, or learn the nuances of the digital world, learning happened. In fact, there is not a day that goes by that I am not trying to learn something new, or hone my ministry craft.

In her book, *Professional Development as Transformative Learning,* Patricia Cranton stated that educators are, "learners of our discipline and students of our clientele. We keep up to date by attending conferences, reading journals, and perhaps formally studying our discipline."[6] I have taken this to heart and make sure that learning and growth in life and ministry occur. The world changes so fast and there is a need to be adaptable, flexible, and willing to go with the flow of the world. It is the intense desire to learn, and the ability to adapt to the surroundings, making the necessary changes that has brought me to this place in my life and career. God's call and direction for my life has definitely been a transformative learning experience, one that has prepared me to answer the gentle whisper, *unless*.

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[6] Patricia Cranton, *Professional Development as Transformative Learning* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1996), 5.

Where it all began

Roman Catholicism, Anglicanism, and Methodism were the three main denominations at the turn of the century. Some scholars would even contend that Methodism was *the* denomination due to their rapid growth. In fact as Weems described in his book, *Focus: The Real Challenges that Face the United Methodist Church*:

> By 1864, their status as the largest denomination in the country was reflected in the words of Abraham Lincoln. When a delegation of Methodists paid a visit to the president, he presented them with a letter saying, 'While all churches are important, . . . it may fairly be said that the Methodist Episcopal Church . . . is, by its greater numbers, the most important of all.[7]

Methodism, much like its founder, John Wesley, was on fire and grew rapidly during the early 1900's. As Dr. Lovett Weems stated, "At the 1900 General Conference, the bishops of the church reported in their Episcopal Address that since the 1800 General Conference, the nation's population had grown by fourteen times while Methodist membership had grown by ninety-seven times."[8] The membership rates within the Methodist churches were outgrowing the population of the country. Needless to say, the Methodist church had significant growth and significant influence. That growth and influence spread throughout the Methodist churches in the country, including those located in two small villages in Ohio, the village of Fairfield and the village of Osborn.

The Village of Fairfield began from a proclamation by Chief Tecumseh to William Cozad. Cleo Hodgkins documented Chief Tecumseh's proclamation in his history of Fairborn, *A Tale of Two Towns,* when Chief Tecumseh stated, "Yonder lies fair

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[7] Dr. Lovett Weems Sr., *Focus: The Real Challenges that Face the United Methodist Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2011), xvi-xvii.

[8] Dr. Lovett Weems, xvii.

field. Me see thousand white men moving about in that beautiful fair field."[9] Chief Tecumseh was correct in his vision and proclamation. Through the leadership of William and Samuel Cozad and Joseph Tatum, a land settlement began around 1810, called Fairfield, thanks to the words of Chief Tecumseh. Fairfield grew and quickly expanded over the years, boasting a school, three hotels, an exchange tavern, dry goods and grocery store, two wagon shops and a blacksmith shop.[10]Also located in Fairfield was a Methodist Episcopal Church, which opened for worship around 1816, and for a while was the only church in Fairfield. [11]

By 1850 Fairfield laid claim to a growing population that reached a century high at 500 people. According to Hodgkins, the townspeople began hearing the words, "the railroad is coming through."[12] Even though the railroad would bring in new people, new business, and new opportunities, the people of Fairfield had worked hard for their homes, businesses and land; a railroad was the last thing they wanted coming through and uprooting everything they had worked hard at building. They refused to let the railroad come through their village. The result was 66 years of minimal population growth.

The railroad however, did not let go of its plan to build, and found an area on the northwest side of Fairfield, the neighboring village of Osborn. Hodgkins stated;

> The newly inspired village was laid out in 1850 by John Cox and Samuel Stafford, with the assistance of a surveyor, Washington Calloway. A street 300 feet wide was provided for the Mad River and Lake Erie railroad right-of-way and

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[9] Cleo Hodgkins, "A Tale of Two Towns," City of Fairborn, Ohio History, accessed December 14, 2014, http://ci.fairborn.oh.us/Portals/0/pdfs/A5700a_History.pdf.

[10] Ibid.

[11] John M. Myer Sr. *A History of the United Methodist Church of Fairborn*, 1972 (no publishing information provided), 2.

[12] Cleo Hodgkins, "A Tale of Two Towns," City of Fairborn, Ohio History, accessed December 14, 2014, http://ci.fairborn.oh.us/Portals/0/pdfs/A5700a_History.pdf.

> tracks. Samuel Hadwell built the first house in Osborn in the same year. Growth was not immediate, as it was almost a year later when Henry Huskett put up the second one. The new village was recorded on May 20, 1851 and incorporated in 1876. The village was named in honor of the railroad Superintendent, who was Mr. Osborn.[13]

The new village of Osborn grew faster than the village of Fairfield ever did. Hodgkins observed that by the turn of the century Osborn:

> . . . could boast of two dry goods stores, groceries, bakery, two hardware stores, two drug stores, one barber shop, one fruit store, one hotel, two blacksmith shops, two wagon shops, one express office, one paint shop, one grist mill, one commission grain dealer, one lumber yard, four churches (Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Catholic) one grade school with four departments, one select school, one justice, two physicians, two lodges (Masons and Odd Fellows), and five saloons.[14]

As Osborn was growing and thriving from the railroad, Fairfield was soon to follow again, thanks in part to the Wright brothers and their flying machine. The Wright brothers allowed Fairfield to get back onto the map and stay there permanently.

By 1916, as Hodgkins reports, "Thousands of workmen were building hangars for airplanes, barracks for the troops, warehouses, and other structures necessary to make up an operational flying field and support depot."[15] This soon turned into a supply and training area and was quickly known around the world as the Fairfield Aviation General Supply Depot, and eventually became known as Wright-Patterson Air Force Base on January 13, 1948.[16] The population of Fairfield exploded because of the air industry, but the Village of Fairfield was landlocked with the Air Depot to the West, the Village of

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[13] Ibid.

[14] Cleo Hodgkins, "A Tale of Two Towns," City of Fairborn, Ohio History, accessed December 14, 2014, http://ci.fairborn.oh.us/Portals/0/pdfs/A5700a_History.pdf.

[15] Ibid.

[16] "Wright-Patterson Air Force Base Historical Information," Created December 2, 2008, accessed, December 14, 2012, http://www.wpafb.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=6234.

Osborn on the East side, the Greene County line to the north and another township line to the south, thus the combining of the two separate villages of Fairfield and Osborn was only a matter of time. In the midst of all the growth, in the two villages stood two Methodist Episcopal churches.

In the early 1900's the Fairfield-Osborn area had two Methodist Episcopal Churches, Osborn M.E. and Fairfield M.E. These two churches were the only Methodist affiliated churches in the area. The two churches were consolidated when the village of Osborn was relocated to just east of the village of Fairfield, during the 1920's (let it be noted that these two villages did not come together officially until January 1, 1950 when the charter was delivered forming the new village of Fairborn, Ohio.)[17] Thus, the Fairfield M.E. Church and Osborn M.E. Church merged together in 1922 forming the Fairfield-Osborn M.E. Church and would eventually be renamed Fairborn United Methodist Church.

Fairfield-Osborn M.E. Church continued to see growth, although it may have been slower at times, growth was still occurring. However, it was noted by John Myer in his history of Fairborn UMC:

> The years from 1926-1943, in fact, were most significant ones in the life of the church. During that period the financial status was a most unstable one, and except for some yeoman like effort by the leaders and members the history of the Fairfield M.E. Church could have well come to an abrupt halt during that time period.[18]

Even though the church was in a financial crisis due to various loans needed for updating and remodeling, they still grew in numbers. They continued to overcome the obstacles

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[17] Cleo Hodgkins, "A Tale of Two Towns," City of Fairborn, Ohio History, accessed December 14, 2014, http://ci.fairborn.oh.us/Portals/0/pdfs/A5700a_History.pdf

[18] John M. Myer Sr. *A History of the United Methodist Church of Fairborn*, 1972. (No publication information provided),15.

that plagued them at that time. By 1936 the membership had grown to 489 persons, which was an increase of 151 people from 1928. The membership numbers were good, lives were being impacted, and the finances were getting better. By 1948 the membership was up to 822 people. Myer noted, "As the church moved out of the forties and into the nineteen fifties, it, along with the new City of Fairborn, continued to grow rapidly and once again the physical facility began to be inadequate to house the membership which had grown to 1010 by 1952." The church grew from the inside out, and then came 1964.[19]

On all accounts 1964 was a good year. The Beatles invaded mainstream music in the United States and brought British Pop Music to the forefront; the New York Yankees won the World Series; the Ford Motor Company made the first Ford Mustang car and the first Buffalo Wings were made at the Anchor Bar in Buffalo, New York.[20]

On a more local scale, just a year prior, 1963, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base donated the land of what was then "Area D" to the State of Ohio to be used for the creation of Wright State University.[21] Then in 1964 Wright State University, located officially in Fairborn, Ohio, began holding classes in Allyn Hall, with 3302 students registered.[22]

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[19] John M. Myer Sr., *A History of the United Methodist Church of Fairborn*, 1972 (No publication information provided), 18.

[20] What Happened in 1964, accessed December 14, 2012, http://www.thepeoplehistory.com/1964.html.

[21] "Wright-Patterson Air Force Base Historical Information," Created December 2, 2008, accessed December 14, 2012, http://www.wpafb.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=6234.

[22] "Ohio History Central," Wright State University, accessed December 14, 2012, http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=2589.

Within the life of the church 1964 Fairborn UMC saw significant membership growth, reaching a high of 1475 members.[23] 1964 was a good year; however, as good as 1964 was, it was the last year that both Fairborn UMC and the United Methodist denomination saw significant growth. As society and culture moved on and progressed, the church did not. The city adapted to the surroundings of an innovative and progressing area and society. The Air Force base improved, changed and updated their process; the University grew and expanded, offering more classes, and opportunities for students. Yet since 1965 the United Methodist denomination has experienced dramatic decline in numbers[24], and so has Fairborn UMC. 1965 was the year of the separation between a society, culture and area continuing down the path of forward thinking and innovation, and a church and denomination that for the most part remained the same.

Within the next forty-five years the church saw pastors come and go, all who tried to implement missions and ministry to breathe life into the church, and yet, rooms were still empty and fewer people filled the pews. Those who continued to attend were becoming older and older. As of 2012, Fairborn UMC had 336 people in membership, with an average age of forty-five years old. That is an 1139 person loss over a forty-eight year period. Understanding that people come and go, this is still a significant loss. However, as grim as the membership numbers are, and the tendency and desire to live off of past successes, the church continues to do the work of God.

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[23] John M. Myer Sr. *A History of the United Methodist Church of Fairborn*, 1972. 25.

[24] Dr. Lovett Weems Sr. *Focus: The Real Challenges that Face the United Methodist Church.* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2011), xvii.

There is life at Fairborn UMC and hope arising within the walls. The church is not anywhere close to 1475 members as it was in 1964, but it seems to be on the upswing of the numbers pendulum. Over the past three years the church has started using the multi-purpose room on a daily basis. Throughout the week there is something going on every night from karate, praise band practice, YMCA affiliated basketball, cheerleading, etc. Outreach within the community happens on a weekly basis and people witness the church existing for more than a few hours on Sunday morning.

The church is growing, slowly, yet in the midst of the growth there still remains an absence of younger adults, primarily millennials. The past year the church has seen an increase in the overall number of millennials participating within the life of the church. however they still make up less than 20% of the overall membership of the church. It is hard to prepare for the future, raise-up and cultivate new leaders, and be in partnership[25] with the next generation, when the church is void of the next generation.

The Paradox

In every age and culture the church has found a way to successfully and effectively communicate the message of God. For clarification purposes, as the term "message of God" will appear throughout the remainder of this document, it is important to identify what is understood in this term.

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[25] Dave Kinnaman, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church...and Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: BakerBooks, 2011), 203.

The dimensions of the use of this term in this study can best be described as the story of God's self-revelation. God created the world perfect,[26]but humanity tainted this perfection through acts of disobedience and rejection of God and God's continual showering of grace, love and mercy. [27]

God's self-revelation to Abraham[28] set in motion the foundation of the Israelite nation and subsequent history of the entire people of Israel. God used the judges[29] and prophets[30] to speak to the people of Israel of dark days to come if they did not repent and continued down their self-destructive path.

Then after 400 years of silence,[31]angels announced the birth of the Messiah, who would come and save people from their sins.[32] God sent God's one and only son, Jesus, who was God in the flesh, fully God and fully man.[33] Jesus was sent into a sinful world, was anointed to preach the good news to the poor, and bring a message of peace, justice, grace, unconditional love, and salvation to all people who believed in him.[34]

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[26] Genesis 1-2:4.

[27] Genesis 3:1-7.

[28] Genesis 12.

[29] Exodus 18:22; Book of Judges.

[30] Jonah; Amos; Hosea; Micah; Isaiah; Nahum; Habakkuk; Zephaniah; Joel; Obadiah; Haggai; Zechariah; Malachi.

[31] Kay Arthur, *God's Blueprint for Bible Prophecy* (Eugene: Harvest House Publishers, 1995), 112. The book of Malachi records the last Old Testament prophecy given by God. After this prophecy God did not inspire canonical Scripture again for 400 years. This 400 years of silence which followed the book of Malachi is called the intertestament period. Although God was silent in that God did not speak through the prophets during this time, the events of these 400 years testify to the fulfillment of much that was written by Daniel the prophet.

[32] Matthew 1:21.

[33] John 1:1-3.

[34] Luke 4:18.

Jesus grew up in the household of Mary and Joseph, and began his earthly ministry around age thirty.[35] Jesus taught for a period of time when he was arrested, tried and convicted of blasphemy and sedition[36]; all these things being done to fulfill his purpose and the words of the ancient prophets.

Jesus was tortured and hung on a cross to be crucified.[37]Even with his last breath he uttered words of love and forgiveness (when these words were recorded in Luke 23:24), "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."[38] Jesus' body was taken and buried in a sealed tomb for three days.[39] On the third day he was resurrected, just as he said he would.[40] Jesus appeared to his disciples and many others before he ascended into Heaven.[41] Awaiting his return, the disciples continued to spread the good news of the God of Israel, and of Jesus' life and ministry, death, and resurrection to all who would hear the message.[42]

The success of the church's communication method(s) is evident in the number of lives that have been influenced and transformed over the years because of transmission of the salvific message of God. However, there eventually comes a time in every age and culture when it is necessary to reconsider the communication methods. As was realized

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[35] Matthew 4:12; Mark 1:14; Luke 4:14.

[36] Matthew 26:47-67, 27:11-26; Mark: 14:43-48, 53-65, 15:1-15; Luke 22:47-53, 66-71, 23:1-25; John 18:1-14, 19-23, 28-40, 19:1-16.

[37] Matthew 27:32-44; Mark 15:21-41; Luke 23:26-49; John 19:16-37.

[38] Luke 23:24 NRSV.

[39] Matthew 27:57-61; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:38-42.

[40] Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-10.

[41] Matthew 28:11-20 ; Mark 16:9-20; Luke 24:13-53; John 20:11-29; Acts 1:1-11.

[42] Acts 2.

with the invention of the printing press, eventually the mode of communication changes, and that change influences how culture communicates, and the ways in which culture hears and experiences the message.

In merely observing how culture communicates, the church would be remiss to assume that what worked in the past will continue to work in the future. In fact, due to the advent of technology, the world changes so fast that the things that worked, even two or three years ago, may not have the same effectiveness today.

Dr. Lovett Weems quoted Charles Handy when he said, "It is one of the paradoxes of success, that the things and ways which got you there are seldom those things that will keep you there."[43] Therefore, it is important for the church to recognize and understand the dominant mode of cultural communication in order to continue their its success of reaching those within the culture, those not yet part of the church, and those in the current and future generations.

Dave Kinnaman, author of *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church...and Rethinking Faith* stated:

> Young adults describe their individual faith journeys in startlingly similar language. Most of their stories include significant disengagement from church—and sometimes from Christianity altogether. But it's not just dropping out that they have in common. Many young people who grew up in church and have since dropped out do not hesitate to place blame. They point the finger, fairly or not, at the establishment: *you lost me*.[44]

The church is losing young people, especially those that fall in the millennial generation, at a rather alarming rate. The millennials are those individuals in the generation born between 1980-2000. One of the reasons these individuals are leaving the church is

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[43] Dr. Lovett Weems., *xvii.*

[44] Dave Kinnaman, 9.

because the church struggles to communicate an incredibly important message, in a relevant and culturally focused manner. Instead, what is communicated is often considered outdated and irrelevant.

Let us be clear, it is not God that is irrelevant and outdated; rather it is the methods and processes of connection, the presentations of the message, and modes of communication that are. In looking towards the future, the church needs to update and revise the practices that led to the successes of the past, and then become innovators within an ever changing, highly social and digital culture[45]to keep the ancient message of Jesus relevant and meaningful now.

John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, realized that the furtherance of the Gospel hinged on understanding the language of the culture, and communicating the message of God in a manner in which his audience could resonate. Whether meeting with the religious societies, or preaching to those outside the bars and coalmines, Wesley found a way to appropriately communicate with the culture he was in. In fact, John Wesley's dedication to reaching those within the culture and those not yet in the church, led him to stretch the Methodist movement across the Atlantic Ocean to the United States furthering the ministry and communicating the message of God to those outside of England.

In the midst of one of the greatest shifts in the history of communication culture, the church has the opportunity to reach an entire generation of individuals who are waiting for the sacred to enter their digital world, speak their language, and make the Gospel relevant to them. As Mordecai reminded his cousin Esther in the book of Esther

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[45] Digital is pertaining to the culture that has developed in which computer technology is the dominant means of communication.

4:14, "And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a times as this?" The time has come for the church to do a little stretching of their its own and find new methods to communicate the message of the Gospel. The time has come for Fairborn UMC to set aside the tendencies and desires to replicate a 48-year old model, and continue following their vision to be a "relevant church" by communicating the message of the Gospel relevantly to those in digital culture.

The time has come because unless Fairborn UMC finds new patterns of success and breaks the paradoxical cycle of previous assumptions, we run the risk of falling into the same old routines, and prolonging "the way it has always been done." Unless. Unless we care a whole awful lot about the next generations by setting our personal comforts and preferences aside, nothing will get better.[46] The challenge set before us is to respond to, "unless," and be the catalyst that sets in motion new ways to communicate the message of God for generations to come.

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[46] Adaptation of Dr. Seuss' quote from *The Lorax.* Dr. Seuss, *The Lorax* (New York, NY: Random House, 1971), 58.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

Introduction

In any relay race, there is a moment when the baton is passed from one runner to the other. This moment happens within the exchange zone. The exchange zone is an area within which the runners have a limited amount of time to transfer the baton. If the baton is transferred outside the exchange zone, the runners are disqualified. If the baton is dropped within the exchange zone, the runners are disqualified. Thus, one could say, the exchange zone determines the success or failure of the race.[1]

The church is currently in the midst of transferring the spiritual baton to the next generation. The transferring of the Gospel message is critical to the continued success and furtherance of church's mission. Found at the very end of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus transfers the spiritual baton to his disciples. Throughout the following discussion, the analysis of the spiritual baton transfer, outlined in Matthew 28:16-20, is looked at through the lens of performance criticism.

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[1] Concept used from a presentation given by Christine Caine at the Atlanta Catalyst Conference, 10/2012. She associated the baton transfer with Leadership within the church and scriptures from Judges and Hebrews. The church is in a crucial period right now, we are within an exchange zone and we must get the exchange of the spiritual baton correct if the next generation of leaders and Christians are going to take the movement forward.

Performance Criticism

Most scholars would contend that the New Testament scriptures are a compilation of texts meant to be examined, dissected, and studied, often alone, through various methods of analysis: form criticism, redaction criticism, source criticism, textual criticism, and socio-historical criticism. Each of these methods has the potential for a deeper understanding and meaning of the New Testament texts; however, none of these methods specifically address the scriptures as if they were orally presented or even performed in front of an audience. Thus, it is important to understand when reading and studying the New Testament scriptures that they did not come about as strictly written words, penned on a page. As David Rhoads has written, "Rather, the contents of the New Testament originated as oral stories and spoken, epic-like tales and rhetorical orations and oral-letters and theater-like performances."[2] Therefore, the first century Christians would have heard and experienced the stories of the Gospels and Epistles through an emotionally charged performance. The stories then came to life, rather than simply being read from a papyrus scroll.

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[2] David Rhoads. "Biblical Performance Criticism: Performance as Research," Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, *Journal of Oral Tradition,* January, 2010, 157.

In his article, *Performance Criticism: An Emerging Methodology in Biblical Studies,* David Rhoads contends:

> Interpreting the New Testament writings without taking account of the dynamics of oral performance has surely led to misconceptions and misjudgments about their meaning and rhetoric. To study these texts now as oral compositions that were performed in an oral culture can potentially transform our experience of the writings of the New Testament and our picture(s) of early Christianity.[3]

Rhoads then defines performance criticism as something that:

> . . . reframes the biblical materials in the context of oral/scribal cultures, embraces many methods, constructs scenarios of ancient performances, learns from contemporary performances, and reinterprets biblical materials accordingly.[4]

Through performance criticism, the opportunity is present to gain new and fresh insights into the scriptures, and the ability to enter into the story and experience how the story sounded and felt to those who heard it originally.

To understand the scriptures through the lens of performance criticism is to accept a paradigm shift from understanding the scriptures in their original historical context as strictly printed hand-written manuscript texts read by individual readers to stories performed for audiences. One cannot simply take the previous methodologies used for analyzing printed or hand-written manuscript texts and apply them to the oral tradition. Rather, the new method, performance criticism, needs to be applied to the scriptures performed orally to a specific audience.[5] When looking at the scriptures through the lens of performance criticism the audience, the socio-historical context, the performer and/or

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[3] David Rhoads. "Performance Criticism: An Emerging Methodology in Biblical Studies," Luther School of Theology at Chicago; 10 http://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/Rhoads_Performance.pdf, 5-4-2013, 10:40pm.

[4] David Rhoads, "What is Performance Criticism?" accessed December 16, 2014, http://www.biblicalperformancecriticism.org/index.php/component/content/article?id=12:what-is-performance-criticism&catid=3.

[5] Ibid., 36.

storyteller, the composition-as-performance itself, the material context, and the impact must all be taken into consideration.[6] The following is an analysis of Matthew 28:16-20 through the lens of the performance criticism method.

The Gospel of Matthew

It is zimportant to note, when thinking of the original audience, that the audience would have heard the gospel presented as a whole, much like a theater performance today.[7] These performances could take up to three to four hours to complete depending on the story, but again, it was an exciting and lively telling of the stories, not merely a casual, and often dry reading of the text as is typically presented in most worship settings today. The performances engaged the audience and brought them into the story experience as a whole. David Rhoads states, "The audience was collective, and the emotional and ideological responses to a performance were communal. The audience of gospels and letters were likely quite involved in the performance with verbal and emotional reactions throughout."[8] Thus, the audience is key to the overall story experience. David Patte in his commentary on Matthew suggests that the Gospel of Matthew was constructed for hearers, rather than readers. The hearers then played an important role in the conveyance and even telling of the composition.[9]

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[6] Ibid., 10-13.

[7] David Rhoads, "Biblical Performance Criticism: Performance as Research," Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, *Journal of Oral Tradition,* January, 2010; 162.

[8] Ibid.,165.

The Gospel of Matthew was more than likely composed around A.D. 80-85 in, and around Syria or Palestine for those in the generation after the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Matthew's audience was comprised of mostly Jewish-Christians who were, "...either on the verge of or just recovering from a substantial break from Judaism as a whole."[10] Some understand this to be a possible conclusion, however it is not well supported by the data of audience address or story structure of the Gospel. Rather, this view of Matthew's audience is better stated as a widely held opinion by scholars who have studied Matthew as a text read by readers. Another distinction is between the community of the Gospel's origin, (a Jewish Christian community) and the audiences to which the Gospel is addressed (a community of Jews in the Hellenistic cities of the Roman Empire). Those within Matthew's audience were also trying to figure out how to live faithfully as Jewish-Christians in a post-temple world. In his book, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism,* J. Andrew Overman states,

> The factor within the locale and setting of Matthew's community which most profoundly influenced its development was the competition and conflict with so-called formative Judaism—a group which, like the Matthean community, was also involved in a process of social construction and definition.[11]

Both groups, Matthew's Jewish-Christian community and formative Judaism, were in the midst of gaining the upper hand.[12] Much of Matthew's composition is in response to the struggles and tensions created between the Jewish-Christians and formative Judaism; as

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[9] David Patte, *Global Bible Commentary: Gospel of Matthew* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2004), 352.

[10] Craig L. Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2009), 151.

[11] J. Andrew Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism: The Social World of the Matthean Community* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990), 2.

[12] Ibid., *2.*

each group sought to, "defend the claim that they alone were the true heirs to their religious heritage."[13] Overman concluded his discussion on Matthew's audience by asserting that the Gospel of Matthew cannot be understood apart from the tensions and conflict between formative Judaism and Jewish-Christian in a post-temple world. The Matthean community was in constant struggle and felt the pressure to conform to formative Judaism. It was this conflict, as Overman stated, that "played an essential role in the development," and within the "world of the Matthean community."[14]

Due to the Jewishness of Matthew's audience, the people would have brought certain stories with them to the overall hearing of the Gospel Story. Surely, they would have been cognizant of the stories passed down from generation to generation, stories such as Abraham, Moses, Joshua, and King David. They would have come to the performance with knowledge of the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Malachi, and Zechariah. The various stories and assumptions the audience would have had as they listened to the story within our study of Matthew 28:16-20, will be addressed later in further detail.

Matthew's audience was a unique community of Jewish-Christians who were doing everything they could to maintain their identity, primarily as Jewish-Christians, against formative Judaism. Matthew wanted his audience to know that for them, struggling Jewish-Christians, there was hope and even though the physical temple of the Lord was gone, Yahweh was and always will be, Immanuel, God with us.

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[13] Craig L. Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey,* 151.

[14] J. Andrew Overman, *5.*

The Story of the Great Commission: Matthew 28:16-20

When musicians go to perform a piece of music they, typically, do not go into the performance without any knowledge of how the musical piece sounds. Often the musician enters the performance having practiced numerous times the musical piece. They are aware of the notes, and more specifically how the notes are supposed to sound. Within any given musical piece, there are portions that are soft, or piano, and then crescendo into the louder, or forte portions of the song. Every musical piece has an ebb and flow; it has a specific way it is supposed to sound, but one must know the music to re-create the sound. Thus, it is the same when looking at a biblical story through the lens of performance criticism.

In order to interpret the story found in Matthew 28:16-20 from the perspective of performance criticism, it is important to understand the story as how it would have sounded to the original audience. This understanding is more than simply regurgitating the information as if to memorize the story for a grade. The goal is to *know* the story, to internalize it and make the story an experience. It is crucial in the re-creating and re-telling of the story that the story is verbally performed, ideally without notes, in order to create the best atmosphere and experience possible. After the re-creation of the story has been achieved, it is necessary to move on to the analyzing the scripture.

Within the analysis, it is important to look for the various sounds that are a part of the story, again, trying to figure out what the sound ebb and flow of the story are. Creating a sound map will help us understand the various sounds of the story. According to Tom Boomershine the sound map consists of three elements: the cola (the overall number of words said in a single breath); a period (the unit of sound composed of more than one cola); and the overall episode (the inferred larger unit of two or more periods with characteristic marks of beginnings and endings)[15].

The task of the storyteller is to provide, as accurately as possible, a re-creation of the story and how it would have sounded. By mapping the sounds, the storyteller can better understand the ebb and flow of the story and how the story would have sounded to the originally audience. These sounds give the story meaning, emphasis, and character. In essence, the sounds of the story provide the auditory soundtrack of the performance.

Sound Map of Matthew 28:16-20

v. 16
1.1 "Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed.

v. 17
1.2 When they saw him, they worshiped him;
1.3 but some doubted.

v. 18
2.3 And Jesus came and said to them,
2.4 "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

[15] Notes from Tom Boomershine, United Theological Seminary, May, 2013.

v. 19
3.1 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,
3.2 baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
3.3 and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.

v. 20
3.4 And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."[16]

Analysis of the Sound Map for Matthew 28:16-20

Upon the analysis of the sound map for Matthew 28:16-20, we can note various aspects that come into play with the telling of the story. Those aspects are the sounds, gestures, words and/or images that trigger previous stories brought by the audience, and specific words of importance to the overall effectiveness of the story telling. Each periodic episode will be looked at individually in the following analysis of the story.

Within the first period, which consists of the colon 1.1, the sound begins soft, almost as if it is fading in. This is possibly the case because of the opening word, **δέ**[17], which is more of a transition word meaning then, moreover, but, and now. Often the emphasis on such a word as **δέ**[18] is softer to start and then throughout the remainder of the sentence the voice increases. Thus is the case with the opening colon within the first period.

Another note on the softness of the opening verse would be the reference to the mountain. One can almost hear the softness of the air as it moves across the mountain, blowing ever so slowly and quietly. Therefore, the storyteller addresses the audience with a quieter tone, describing to them the scene.

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[16] Blue Letter Bible, "Gospel of Matthew 28 - (RSV - Revised Standard Version)," accessed May 4, 2013, http://www.blueletterbible.org/Bible.cfm?b=Mat&c=28&t=RSV.

[17] Blue Letter Bible, "Dictionary and Word Search for de (Strong's 1161)," accessed May 4, 2013, http:// www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm? Strongs=G1161&t=RSV.

[18] Blue Letter Bible, "Dictionary and Word Search for de (Strong's 1161)."

The reference to the "mountain" may have triggered various memories and stories within the audience's history. The audience hearing this story was a Jewish audience and more than likely would have remembered the various mountain stories from the past. Such stories that may have come to mind were Abraham and Isaac on top of Mount Moriah,[19] Moses and the burning bush,[20] and Moses on the mountain receiving the Ten Commandments.[21] Or more recently within the hearing of the Gospel story, the temptation of Jesus on a very high mountain,[22] the sermon on the mount,[23] the various mentions of Jesus going up on the mountain to pray or seek solitude,[24]the high mountain where the transfiguration took place,[25] and finally the mountains in which the arrest, trial and crucifixion occurred.[26] Each of these references or memories could have been triggered upon recitation of cola 1.1 of the first period.

As the scene develops on into the second period, the storyteller's voice increases and gets progressively more emphatic until cola 1.2 where an emphasis is placed on, **προσκυνέω**[27], "they worshiped him." Here the storyteller begins building up the

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[19] Genesis 22:1-18.

[20] Exodus 3.

[21] Exodus 20.

[22] Matthew 4:8.

[23] Matthew 5:1-8:1.

[24] Matthew 14:23; 15:29.

[25] Matthew 17:1.

[26] William L. Banks, *In Search of the Great Commission: What Did Jesus Really Say?* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1991),70-71. Biblical Reference from Matthew 26-27.

[27] Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for proskyneō (Strong's 4352)," accessed May 4, 2013, http:// www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm? Strongs=G4352&t=RSV.

moment, almost with the same pace as the disciples traveling up the mountain, creating a sense of excitement and amazement at the risen Christ who awaits them at the top. Then when the disciples reach the mountain, the storyteller might even speed up the tempo of the story, or in the least increase the vocal volume, by creating the excitement and wonder of the disciples seeing Jesus. For when they see Jesus they "worship" Him. This worship is not the typical, stand up and raise a hand in praise. Rather this worship, this **προσκυνέω**[28] of Jesus on top of the mountain is the get down on your hands and knees type of worship. The disciples were literally on the ground, prostrate before Jesus in worship. In this instance, the storyteller would not have necessarily been on the ground, as were the disciples. This gesture would hinder the graceful telling of the story as well as exclude and alienate those who still doubted the resurrection. However, the storyteller could have alluded or implied that such a gesture took place with the movement of hands downward.

After a brief pause, the storyteller addresses the crowd and drops to a softer tone, and claims in cola 1.3, "but…" (short pause here) "…some **διστάζω**[29], some doubted and waivered. By dropping both the tone and voice, the storyteller takes away an accusatory emphasis in claiming there are still some who doubted, questioned, and had issue with Jesus being the true Messiah of Israel.

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[28] Blue Letter Bible, "Dictionary and Word Search for proskyneō (Strong's 4352)," accessed May 4, 2013, http:// www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm? Strongs=G4352&t=RSV.

[29] Blue Letter Bible, "Dictionary and Word Search for distazō (Strong's 1365)."

As the second period develops the storyteller moves to more of an affirmative tone, by stating **καί,**[30] which can mean and, but, or indeed. Here, however, **καί**[31] tends to carry more force than a normal transitional word. Thus, the narrator, by addressing the audience and once again setting the scene for them, begins the second period with more force and proclamation of what Jesus is going to say.

In cola 2.1 we see, for the first time in this story, a shift in character from the storyteller speaking to the audience, to Jesus speaking to the disciples. A simple way for the storyteller to make this shift in character is to briefly look down then return facing forward and begin speaking, now as Jesus, to the audience, who are now addressed as the disciples. Storyteller/Jesus[32] (the storyteller who now embodies Jesus) moves closer to the audience/disciples[33] and now speaks to them directly.

Jesus speaks very authoritatively, not necessarily loudly, but speaks firmly with power and purpose when he says in cola 2.2, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me," all the while gesturing with his arms and hands the vastness of his power and might. This is the beginning of the sound climax of the story. Jesus has just given his proclamation that He alone has the power and authority to do all things (even silence the doubters), as well as command all things to be done in his name.

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[30] Blue Letter Bible, "Dictionary and Word Search for kai (Strong's 2532)," accessed May 4, 2013, http:// www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm? Strongs=G2532&t=RSV.

[31] Blue Letter Bible, "Dictionary and Word Search for kai (Strong's 2532)."

[32] For the remainder of the discussion we will refer to the narrator as Jesus, and the audience as the disciples, unless otherwise noted.

[33] See reference from note 84.

The third period consists of three cola 3.1-3.4. The sound of this third period should have the same tone, if not an increased tone from that of the previous cola. Jesus has claimed his authority and is now proclaiming the action that needs to take place by the disciples. Cola 3.1 begins with the proclamation of **πορεύω**[34], which means to go, to carry forward or transfer something. Again, this is not necessarily an overly loud proclamation, but there needs to be an emphasis of a firm and strong proclamation and commissioning of the disciples to continue on with the message of the good news brought forth by Jesus. A gesture used here by Jesus could be one of providing direction with one arm, emphasizing the need to continue in a specific direction. Alternatively, another gesture and image could be that of Jesus as the quarterback of a huddle with his arms around the disciples.

It is important to understand the careful placement of the word, *go* in the story. *Go*, must be accompanied with the main verb, **μαθητεύω**[35], meaning to make disciples, the task to go, carry and transfer the message is thus to be done right away, not making any hesitations. The use of *go* and *to make disciples* would have caused the audience to recall the recent calling of the disciples to follow Jesus, with his promise to *make* them fishers of men. They too would have been invited to experience the opportunity to *GO* out and *make disciples* within their own context.

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[34] Blue Letter Bible, "Gospel of Matthew 28 - (KJV - King James Version)," accessed May 4, 2013, http://www.blueletterbible.org/Bible.cfm?b=Mat&c=28&t=KJV.

[35] Blue Letter Bible, "Dictionary and Word Search for *mathēteuō (Strong's 3100,"* accessed May 4, 2013, http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm? Strongs=G3100&t=RSV>.

Still located within the first cola of the third period is the word, **οὖν**[36], meaning therefore, then accordingly, and consequently. Once again this is another transition word, however the sound for this transition is very similar to that of cola 2.3, and is to be spoken by Jesus with a strong and emphatic voice.

At the height of the story and the sound climax is Jesus addressing the disciples and declaring to them, "*Go Therefore, and Make Disciples.*" In composing the story, Matthew could have used another connecting and transition word between *go,* and, *make disciples,* but he chose *therefore*. His choice to use, *therefore,* helps remind the audience that even though there are some who, "still doubt," and still question the reasoning to, "Go…make disciples," Jesus' command is not an issue to be debated or questioned, because Jesus has been given *all authority*. Thus, the usage of, *therefore*, connects Jesus' authority to the task he gave. William L. Banks states:

> Because of this absolute authority invested in Christ by the Father, an authority and rule universally exercised, 'therefore' the disciples are ordered to obey this commission…Thus Christ the Commander stands ready to empower His disciples to carry out what He commands. No mere mortal man could truthfully claim what Christ claims here.[37]

It is because of the authority given to Jesus that he has the autonomy, supremacy, and the power to command the disciples to, *Go…and make disciples* of not just the community around them, but they are to *Go…and make disciples of all nations*.

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[36] Blue Letter Bible, "Dictionary and Word Search for *oun (Strong's 3767)*," accessed May 4, 2013, http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm? Strongs=G3767&t=RSV>.

[37] William L. Banks, *In Search of the Great Commission: What Did Jesus Really Say?* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1991), 74.

Making disciples of *all nations* was a reference the Matthean audience would have been familiar with. At the beginning of Matthew's Gospel story he begins with the gentiles, the *all nations*, as the three wise men come to worship the Christ child. Matthew then ends the story of his Gospel with the declaration from Jesus that the disciples are to, *go* out into *all the nations* and *make disciples*.

As we enter into the cola 3.2 of the third period the sound is still within the climax zone. There is still an emphasis on the command given by Jesus to the disciples. As the disciples are going out, making disciples of all nations, Jesus commands them to **βαπτίζω**, meaning to dip, cleanse or more commonly referred to as baptize. We can envision Jesus' movement and gestures as if he is laying hands on someone getting ready to baptize them.

William L. Banks described baptism in the ancient world as a declaration of a life lived anew: "The ritual signified public identification as a follower of Jesus Christ. And because of the persecution of Christians such baptisms were steps of boldness."[38] Matthew challenged his audience to not only interact with those in the *all nations* category, but to baptize them, to be so bold as to help them publically identify with Jesus and this growing band of Jewish-Christians. The audience would possibly have recalled, early in Matthew's story, the baptism of Jesus,[39] or even the covenant God made with God's people through the ritual of circumcision.[40] All are means of identifying one with God and the covenant God sets forth. The note of identification here would have helped

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[38] William L. Banks, *In Search of the Great Commission: What Did Jesus Really Say?, 81*.

[39] Matthew 3:13.

[40] Genesis 17:1-27.

Matthew's audience as Jewish-Christians trying to solidify their own identity within the faith, understand their identity in and with God, not just Judaism or even formative Judaism. We see this identification take on a deeper meaning with the next statement made within the story.

The baptism is done **εἰς ὄνομα,** *"...in the name of..."* Again this is a method of inclusion for Matthew and his audience and one that was emphasized strongly in the telling of the story. We can hear a small amount of a rhythmic tone in the teller's voice with the repetition of the phrase, *"...in the name of..."* as well as an accentuation and volume build up made upon speaking the word, *name*. Thus the rhythmic patter is heard when the teller said, " . . . baptizing them in the *name* of the Father, in the *name* of the Son, and in the *name* of the Holy Spirit."

A *name* was everything in antiquity. One's *name* represented one's entire being. A name was someone's reputation, livelihood, label and tag. It was important to have a good name; a good name could bring wealth and prosperity. A name represented the total nature and essence of a person.[41] Matthew's audience may have recalled the stories about Abram and Sarai becoming Abraham and Sarah. Alternatively, they may have recalled Jacob's name change to Israel after wresting with God. Knowing the importance of a *name*, "We can better understand that to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ is to be identified with Him, with all that He is, with all the qualities by which he has revealed Himself."[42] As Jewish-Christians the audience was baptized into the name of Jesus, and into the once and for all bath that purified one from all sin and eternal spiritual death.

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[41] William L. Banks, *In Search of the Great Commission: What Did Jesus Really Say?, 82.*

[42] Ibid., *83.*

Cola 3.3 of the third period includes the command to teach the new disciples everything Jesus has taught his disciples. This is one of the mandates for the learning and internalization of the stories and commandments of Jesus. Jesus wanted the disciples to go out and teach the commands to others. Matthew challenged his audience to do the same.

This last cola of the third period comes with much weight to it. When Jesus commands the disciples, he also commands the audience, both Matthew's and those who are to come. Jesus' command brought back reminders of previous commands given by Jesus earlier in the story, commands such as "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."[43] or, "Come follow me, and I will send you out to fish for people."[44] Other commands came from Jesus' sermon on the mount,[45] as he was with his disciples on the water,[46] or teaching a parable on the sheep and the goats.[47] Jesus also commands his disciples in the upper room to remember, eat and drink.[48] The final command of Jesus may have even triggered memories of much older commands given by God in Israel's history such as those given to Moses on Mount Sinai,[49]the many commands found in the Levitical Laws, and the command of the Shema in Deuteronomy 6:4-25, just to name a few. Due to the many commands given to Israel, the people would have understood this

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[43] Matthew 4:17.

[44] Matthew 4:19.

[45] Matthew 5:2-7:29.

[46] Matthew 14:22-33.

[47] Matthew 25:31-46.

[48] Matthew 26:17-30.

[49] Exodus 20:1-21.

final command given by Jesus to be of great importance. The third period ends with the conclusion of the sound climax and the voice of the storyteller now shifts to a lower, but still quite prevalent tone as it transitions into the fourth and final period.

The fourth and final coda is 3.4 and begins with the use of the word, **ἰδού**, which means to behold or see something. The sound is softer with the use of this word, however it is still emphasized strongly. **ἰδού** is an attention getting type of word. Matthew wanted the audience to continue to pay attention to the final few statements because these final statements were some of the most important in *all* of his story. In order to keep their attention the teller would say with a certain vivacity, to arouse continued interest, **ἰδού**.[50] Coupled with the opening word, **καί, ἰδού** could be,

> Used to introduce something (1) new, or (2) quite extraordinary, or (3) as it is here in Matthew 28:20, the continuous present of the Lord. It is the assurance of a circumstance that is seemingly impossible, contrary to human expectation, an yet it takes place, (4) or which is not expected yet sure, (5) or to emphasize the importance or size of a matter.[51]

The use of **καί ἰδού** sets up those hearing the story with the anticipation that something incredible and possibly unexpected is about to happen. This reference is similar to the plot twist at the end of the movie, or the purposeful unresolved chord at the end of a song. **καί ἰδού,** translated as "and lo'" or, "and remember" prompts the audience to prepare to hear something that is beyond expectation. **καί ἰδού** leads us into the final sections of this last cola.

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[50] William L. Banks, *In Search of the Great Commission: What Did Jesus Really Say?, 93.*

[51] Ibid.

Jesus looks into the eyes of the disciples, of those sitting within the audience, and strongly, yet very easily and with a soothing tone, tells them, "I am…" pausing for just a moment, allowing those two words to sink in, then continues on, "…with you always…" This may have been the moment when the tissues came out. The audience is reminded of God's declaration to Moses on the mountain in the story of Exodus 3:14, "God said to Moses, "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I am has sent me to you.'"

The audience is also reminded of the nature of Jesus' birth at the beginning of Matthew's gospel, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us)." Matthew does not want his audience to forget the overarching promise that bookends his story, that is Jesus, the baby born in Bethlehem, the Son of God, the Resurrected Messiah is indeed, Emmanuel God with us.

Matthew leaves the audience with the everlasting promise of Jesus remaining *with them* on their journey as they go out and make disciples, *always*. That is not just on certain days but the promise is that Jesus is with them always. For Matthew's audience, this was an important conclusion. He reminded them that even though they did not have a temple to worship in, God was, and would forever be, with them. Matthew concludes his story with Jesus saying, almost with a vocal tone that fades out, but is not forgotten, "…to the **συντέλεια**[52] of the age," that is, to the end, the completion, and the consummation of the age. Jesus declares that he will be with the disciples always, and if that was not enough, he would be with them until the completion of all things, with or without a temple.

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[52] Blue Letter Bible, "Dictionary and Word Search for *synteleia (Strong's 4930),*" accessed May 4, 2013, http:// www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G4930&t=RSV.

Matthew leaves his audience with a hope and assurance that even though they may still doubt, even though they have fled and potentially even denied Jesus like Peter, that Jesus, the giver of all grace and mercy, the One in whose name they are baptized into, is with them always even until the very consummation of the age.

Conclusion

Upon first glance at the Gospel of Matthew, one might suggest that it is a set of scriptures that were complied so we could read and study the life of Jesus. After further study, we have found that in order to properly understand the gospel of Matthew one must treat it at it as an oral composition that was originally performed in front of a live audience consisting of Jewish-Christians. This audience was impacted by the socio-historical circumstance that befell the region after the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Matthew composed his Gospel as a reaction and response to the circumstance, conflicts and even struggles that the Jewish-Christian people, within the communities in and around Syria and Palestine, were dealing with. Matthew challenged his audience towards the end of the gospel to not remain, but to go out and make new disciples, to carry the message forward, to transfer the gospel to all nations.

The church has been given a task, one that started within the exchange zone on a mountain in Galilee. This task is the continued challenge of the church, to go out carrying the message of God, and transferring the Good News to the next generation of disciples. The task means the church needs to exchange the spiritual baton to a world and a generation that is desperately crying out for hope, for help and a lasting identity. Within

this task, the church also has the responsibility, as did the first disciples and those within Matthew's audience, to teach others the stories of the Gospel. The early church grew and was furthered through word of mouth and the sharing of the stories. The use of digital technology is the twenty-first century version of sharing stories and the message of God through word of mouth.

The ancient stories, shared and taught in a manner that is relevant and congruent with the current generation, will make the transfer of the spiritual baton a success and will leave a lasting legacy for generations to come. If the church fails to teach and to transfer the spiritual baton to the next generation, it runs the risk of leaving a behind an entire generation that does not know the stories. Thus, how this generation is taught is an important task as well.

Jesus taught his disciples in a manner they could grasp. Matthew told his story of the Gospel in a manner his audience could grasp. The church of the twenty-first century needs to teach the Gospel in a manner that the current generations can grasp, resonate with, and then live into and embody.

The world around us has changed and we cannot continue to run this race in the same manner nor teach the stories in the same way. In recognizing that culture speaks a new language, the church must find a way to communicate and teach the biblical stories without compromising the integrity of the ancient message and words. If the church can do this, there will be a successful baton transfer. However, if we continue down the same path using the same methods as have always been used, then as our future is in question. Jesus commanded us to, "go," and "go" we must in order to teach, preserve, and further the message that He started.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

Introduction

The third President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, is attributed to saying, "Every generation needs a new revolution." Spanning both the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the world witnessed a revolution that changed the course of human history. That revolution involved many individuals, both male and female; however, two men in particular played very significant roles, those men being Johannes Gutenberg and Martin Luther. Having lived their adult lives in two different centuries Gutenberg (1398-1468); Luther (1483-1546) never met, but history links these two men together through the invention of the printing press.

In his book, *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther,* Mark U. Edwards, Jr., said in regards to printing and the Protestant Reformation, "...printing was used to reach an audience far larger than any previous movement reached and one that could not have been reached as quickly and as effectively before printing's invention."[1] Edwards also discussed how the medium of printing was used for the first time in Western history to

[1] Mark U. Edwards, Jr., *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), xi.

channel a mass movement that drastically effected change within an institution.[2] In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it was the shift in the transmission of the message, through the new medium of printed media, which created a historic revolution.

Marshall McLuhan discussed in his book, *The Medium is the Message*, the idea that it is the medium by which the message is transmitted that leaves a lasting impact. McLuhan stated, "Societies have always been shaped more by the nature of the media by which men communicate than by the content of the communication."[3] Therefore, McLuhan stated, "The medium is the message. Any understanding of social and cultural change is impossible without a knowledge of the way media work as environments."[4] When Johannes Gutenberg changed the medium by which information was transmitted, he also transformed the message, by making it extremely mobile and one that all people could have access to. The new medium (printed media), in turn, allowed Martin Luther to mass produce his message and start a revolution that changed the church.

The Pre-Printing Press World

Since the dawn of time, people have communicated. Whether that communication came through the making of wood, bone, and stone to create notched sticks marking a given territory,[5] or using the current technologies of telephones, televisions, smart

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[2] Ibid.

[3] Marshall McLuhan, *The Medium is the Message* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, Inc., 1967), 5.

[4] Ibid., 26.

[5] David Crowley and Paul Heyer, *Communication in History: Technology, Culture, Society* (White Plains, NY: Longman Publishing, 1991), 7.

phones, emails, websites, and social media, people have communicated messages through various mediums. Up until the fifteenth century, communication was, for the common lay individual, still primarily oral. Those who could both read and write were very few. Quoting H.J. Chaytor from his book, *Script to Print,* Crowley and Heyer stated, "In the medieval world, those who could read or write were the few, and it is likely that most of them did not read or write with our methods or with our facility."[6] Thus, the only printed medium of communication was through hand written materials and documents done by trained scribes.

Nevertheless, the primary mode of communication was through the oral and spoken word. Crowley and Heyer quoted James Burke when he said, "For the illiterate dialect-speaking villager, the church was the main source of information.... The news of the world, both ecclesiastical and civil, came from the pulpit."[7] When news of the outside world did happen to come into the villages someone, known as the crier, would run through town shouting the news to everyone. Therefore, the villages were only as big as the range of the human voice.[8]

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[6] David Crowley and Paul Heyer, *Communication in History: Technology, Culture, Society,* 63.

[7] Ibid., 68.

[8] Ibid., 68.

The oral medium was the primary form of communication in most avenues of daily life until Johannes Gansfleisch zur Laden zum Gutenberg invented the printing press, and transformed the primary mode of communication of an oral-based society and brought about, "the most radical alteration ever made in Western intellectual history," of which the effects were felt thereafter into every area of human activity.[9]

Before going any further, it is important to understand that Gutenberg did not invent printing. Printed material can be traced back to daily newspapers, printed on wooden blocks, and pressed into papyrus in Rome around 131 AD. In addition, five centuries before Gutenberg invented the printing press, the Chinese were printing from carved wooden blocks, and they too had a movable type using baked clay. However, the Chinese use of baked clay rather than metal characters to replicate as Crowley and Heyer discussed: "nonalphabetic script composed of thousands of characters," proved to be quite a complex system. [10] However, what Gutenberg did was to take the technology of print type and mobilize it. As Fore described Gutenberg's work: "He created the first assembly line of interchangeable parts."[11] Gutenberg's invention of the printing press, "introduced a radical advance in the mass production of books."[12]

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[9] Ibid., 77.

[10] David Crowley and Paul Heyer, *Communication in History: Technology, Culture, Society,* 81.

[11] Ibid., 32

[12] Leonard Sweet, *Viral: How Social Networking is Poised to Ignite Revival* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBook Press, 2012), 3.

According to William Fore, this was no small or quick achievement either:

> From a group of less than thirty characters, Gutenberg made hundreds of "a's," "b's," and "c's," each one of which could be used and reused to create words, and he mounted them on bases that could be fitted together quickly into lines and locked into a frame. He set up six presses, hired twenty-five workmen. It took a great deal of money, three years, and 5,700 calfskins to produce the magnificent Mainz Bible.[13]

Even though printing with Gutenberg's printing press was a lengthy process, it was still easier and faster than writing everything down.

Gutenberg, the Inventor

Johannes Gutenberg, as he is mostly known, was born around 1400[14] in Mainz, Germany. There is much speculation regarding his childhood, but his later skills suggest he did experience some formal education; however, how much and where that education took place is unknown.[15] In 1428, conflicts arose between the guilds and the patrician families in Mainz leading to a repeal of the patricians' civic rights.[16] This conflict may have been what caused Gutenberg to leave the city for the next twenty years[17] and head to Strasbourg, Germany.

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[13] William Fore, 32.

[14] Gutenberg's actual birthdate is unknown, but most scholars believe him to be born between 1394-1400.

John Man, *The Gutenberg Revolution: The Story of a Genius and an Invention that Changed the World* (London, England: Bantam Books, 2009), 26.

[15] Ibid., *28.*

[16] Janet Ing, *Johann Gutenberg and His Bible* (New York, NY: The Typophiles, Inc., 1988), 27.

[17] John Man, *The Gutenberg Revolution: The Story of a Genius and an Invention that Changed the World*, 40.

It was in Strasbourg that Gutenberg began to hone his skills and create necessary contacts that would lead to his later invention. By 1434, Gutenberg received a sum of money made available from an annuity left to him from his mother's death. Gutenberg was able to purchase a home in the outer lying country of Strasbourg where he was free to work and experiment.

As his time in Strasbourg progressed, Gutenberg acquired three partners Hans Riffe, Andreas Dritzehn, and Andreas Heilmann. Gutenberg acquired these three partners to help him mass-produce mirrors for the upcoming pilgrimage of Aachen.[18] An agreement was made giving the men a share of the profit earned from the mass-production of mirrors. However, the pilgrimage was postponed due to the spreading of the plague, and the date changed to the following year, 1439. The men soon realized the "profits would be delayed,"[19] and went to question Gutenberg about what was to happen with the agreement. Upon the partners' inquiry of Gutenberg they discovered he knew of

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[18] Ibid., 47-48.

The yearly journey to Aachen, the cathedral where Charlemagne was buried. In 1000, German King Otto III opened Charlemagne's tomb to find it supposedly, "uncorrupted except for a little decay in the nose." (Man, 47) Otto "placed Charlemagne's white-marble throne on the first-floor gallery, where it stood as the centerpiece for the coronations of German kings for another 500 years and still stands today." (Man, 47) The shrine to Charlemagne and the golden relics were put on constant display, until around the fourteenth century when the relics were only put out for display every seven years.

Because of the limited availability of the holy relics people sought after them on a pilgrimage type of journey hoping to catch a glimpse of their healing power. The demand to see the relics was too great and the display was moved outside where the relics were held up one by one for everyone to see.

The pilgrimage saw over ten-thousand people a day in 1434 and the numbers only grew as the popularity of the relics increased. Due to the massive numbers of people and the limited access to the relics, "word spread that a convex mirror, by capturing a wide-angel view, would absorb the healing radiance of the holy relics." (Man, 48) Thus, the new demand for the mass-production of mirrors, of which Gutenberg was hoping to fill a major role.

Even today, people still pilgrimage to Aachen to see the cathedral and holy relics.

[19] Janet Ing, 28.

of another, "secret art."[20] A new agreement was drawn up, but remained unsigned as one of the partners, Andreas Dritzehen, died unexpectedly while in the midst of attempting to acquire enough finances for his portion of the investment and partnership.[21] Due to the unexpected death of Andreas Dritzehen, the partnership was dissolved and Gutenberg wanted any evidence of what was being worked on by the men destroyed, in an attempt to not let his secret out. Gutenberg did, however, have to repay the Dritzehen brothers, Jörg and Claus, for Andreas' share of the partnership,[22] but once the settlement was resolved Gutenberg was free to pursue whatever project he had in mind and his secret remained secure.[23]

As of 1439 nothing had been mentioned or even attributed to a printing press, however, Gutenberg was in partnership with three men who knew a secret and had access to various forms of cutting instruments and presses. Whether these instruments and presses were used for printing purposes is unknown. What is known is that Gutenberg was very intent on working and perfecting his "adventure and art" printing with movable type.[24]

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[20] John Man, *The Gutenberg Revolution: The Story of a Genius and an Invention that Changed the World*, 52.

[21] Janet Ing, 28.

[22] John Man, *The Gutenberg Revolution: The Story of a Genius and an Invention that Changed the World*, 52.

The new agreement made by two of the three partners, Andreas Dritzehn and Andreas Heilmann, stated that, "The two promise to pay an additional sum, in stages, in effect doubling the size of the enterprise and their own contributions. Riffe either does not come in on the new deal or is sidelined. The agreement is to last five years. It includes a clause stating that in the event of a death, 100 gulden will be repaid to the heirs." (Man, 52)

[23] Ibid., 54-55.

[24] Ibid., 56.

It is somewhat ironic to think that most of the elements needed for Gutenberg's invention actually existed well before his time. It was Gutenberg, however, who added the final touches and put them all together to form a movable print type press capable of mass production. This movable print type allowed Gutenberg to create, as Man states:

> A new state– a bridge – in the transfer of images from steel-engraved letters on a punch to printed letters. In modern technology, the information has to be cloned – a perfect copy of an enduring original. It is the copy that will then produce the new medium itself, the printed page."[25]

By 1443 Gutenberg was still in Strasbourg, more than likely working at perfecting the new medium of movable print type, but by 1444 he had disappeared from Strasbourg all together, and neither Gutenberg nor his secret "adventure and art" were heard from for the next four years.

What led Gutenberg to create the printing press is widely speculated. It could have been the continued advancement of the wood block type and further development of paper. It could have been a push from a close associate, Nicholas of Cusa, who in the midst of the spiritual turmoil of the fifteenth century, was desperately trying to unify Christianity. Christianity was fractured in Europe during the fifteenth century due to various "rivalries and antipathies: Pope v. anti-Pope, German emperor v. one Pope or other, warlords v. emperor, Catholics v. Hussites, and Pope v. his council of senior prelates…."[26] Nicolas could have discussed his goals of Christian unity with Gutenberg in hopes of creating a print material available for the masses. These are just two theories, among many that have been debated throughout history. Scholars across the board are unable to come to an agreement as to what led Gutenberg to create the printing press. All

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[25] John Man, *The Gutenberg Revolution: The Story of a Genius and an Invention that Changed the World*, 83.

[26] Ibid., 57.

that is known is around 1448 Gutenberg re-appears in Mainz and takes out a loan to subsidize his endeavors, most likely those endeavors being printing through movable type.

The Printing Press

After working for twenty plus years on the highly secretive, and often speculated adventure and art, in 1450 Gutenberg finally had perfected the ability to print through movable type and the world has never been the same since. Gutenberg did not begin his publishing career with a long fictional novel nor an autobiography of his life and work. In the beginning, Gutenberg simply needed something that could turn a profit quickly. He had incurred many debts over the years and mass-producing printed material would be costly. Instead of creating a new book altogether, Gutenberg went back to the basics of schooled language and decided to reproduce, in mass form, "the standard Latin grammar, the Ars Grammatica usually referred to by the name of its author, Aelius Donatus."[27] His choice of printing the Donatus provided Gutenberg with a guaranteed market for his newly printed book. The Donatus was needed within the schools and Gutenberg knew that he had the one advantage over others; only he could provide an error-free edition, in which every copy was identical.[28]

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[27] John Man, *The Gutenberg Revolution: The Story of a Genius and an Invention that Changed the World,* 96.

[28] Ibid., 96-97.

With the Donatus looming large over his head and another big idea on the forefront, Gutenberg needed more funding to keep production going. He sought after a man named Johann Fust to be an investor and partner. Fust was well known in Mainz and worked as a goldsmith and merchant. Fust had an adopted son, Peter Schöffer, who worked as a calligrapher in Paris and would make a fine assistant to Gutenberg.[29] This newly formed partnership with Fust and Schöffer required Gutenberg to agree to repay Fust eight hundred gulden at six percent interest, this is the modern-day equivalent of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. This was quite a sum of money, but all necessary if Gutenberg was going to continue his printing operation. Gutenberg was poised and ready for a bigger operation than the Donatus. He had the equipment and the funding; all he needed was the idea. A few ideas came his way, but nothing of great significance happened with them until the Bible.

The Bible was not an idea that happened to come to Gutenberg one sunny day in Mainz. As John Man stated,

> It was the pinnacle of the reforms on which Nicholas of Cusa had embarked in the previous decade, and which he drove through after he became a cardinal. In May 1451, before the seventy Benedictine abbots meeting under his chairmanship in Mainz, Nicholas emphasized the need for monastic libraries to possess a well-translated and edited Bible. As he should have known by then – because Gutenberg had been at work in the city for the last three years – there was only one way to achieve this: by printing from a single source, fixed in metal, beyond any chance of a scribal miscopy or local variation.[30]

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[29] Ibid., 98.

[30] Ibid., 105.

In May 1451, there was still no printed Bible, and still no plans to create one. However, it was the idea to create a printed Bible that may have spurred Gutenberg's mind. The drawback, money; Gutenberg had none. He had come close to breaking even with the printing of the Donatus, and two other small printing projects, but he still had not paid back the interest he owed Fust on the original eight hundred gulden loan. Gutenberg, again going to Fust, asked for another loan of eight hundred gulden, a loan that would allow another printing shop to be established, and one that would aid the massive production of a project such as the Bible. The two men agreed to a new deal, identical to the first deal, eight hundred gulden at six percent interest. Fust had his investment, which looked increasingly profitable, and Gutenberg was once again free to follow his dream.[31]

The Bible in Printed Medium

The Bible was a risky project for Gutenberg. Up until his printing press, scribes, learned men who were otherwise known as copyists, carefully copied the Bible. The scribes would take as long as they needed to copy the biblical scriptures, as they did not want to make any errors. An error within the biblical scriptures could in fact cost someone their salvation; therefore, the scribes made sure that the copies they produced were as accurate as humanly possible. Thus, one can imagine that, when the copyist had in hand for the first time the forty-two line Bible of Gutenberg, he must have been as Victor Scholderer stated:

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[31] Ibid., 107.

> . . . shocked to realize that his occupation had suddenly slipped away from under him, not that it was possible, in the words of a contemporary, to produce mechanically as much reading matter in a day as one man's pen could manage in a year, with the additional advantage, which no pen-work could guarantee, that all copies, no matter how numerous, would show exactly the same text throughout.[32]

As John Man stated, one risk that faced Gutenberg was in order to appeal to churches and rulers he, " . . . would need to match scribal Bibles in beauty and exceed them in accuracy, in two glorious, fat volumes totaling 1275 pages. There might be a media revolution brewing, but it was essential not to look revolutionary, for otherwise no one would buy."[33] Gutenberg's goal was to make the Bible appear within a new form of writing as not printing at all.[34] The risks of the Bible project were high, and yet very appealing to an adventurous inventor who had worked his entire life for a project with such magnitude.

As with everything else already noted about Gutenberg and the process of inventing a printing press, not much information exists regarding the process of creating the first printed Bible. Even though the process of printing the first Bible is unknown, what is historically known is that Gutenberg created a forty-two line Bible, an undertaking of at least two years. This forty-two-line Bible was first printed off his presses in Mainz, Germany around 1454.

The once good partnership with Fust and Schöffer took a terrible turn just as the Bible was ready to be mass-produced. Sometime in the middle of 1455, "with the 42-line Bible off the press, pre-sold, with the money about to roll in, and fame and fortune about

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[32] Victor Scholderer, *Johann Gutenberg: The Inventor of Printing* (London, England: The Trustees of the British Museum, 1963), 23.

[33] John Man, *The Gutenberg Revolution: The Story of a Genius and an Invention that Changed the World,* 108.

[34] Ibid.

to be secured for all, Fust pulled the plug." In a sad state of affairs, Fust sued Gutenberg for his money, two thousand and twenty-six gulden. Gutenberg could not possibly repay, as his money was tied up in the equipment and products used for printing. Fust knew Gutenberg could not come up with the money and made the claim that all of the equipment, and everything pertaining to the printing, was mortgaged to him due to Gutenberg's inability to repay the loan. Fust took Gutenberg to court to stake his claim to either the repayment or the equipment and rights of the presses. Gutenberg failed to show up, instead sent three of his associates to attend the court hearing in his place. The court ruled that Gutenberg should repay Fust anything owed to him for ventures outside the deal, which the two men agreed.

As John Man stated in his book:

> Fust was not a complete villain in the whole scenario; in fact the two men did come to a final agreement after the court hearing. John Man outlined the final deal: Gutenberg could keep the Gutenberghof, with its single press and its jobbing contracts (and perhaps the type of the 42-line Bible, the fate of which is still a mystery). And, out of the goodness of his heart, Fust would presumably, after repaying himself, make sure that Gutenberg got his share of the profits from the Bible.[35]

As can be seen, Fust was not truly the bad guy as he has been portrayed throughout the centuries. What can be noted is that at the pinnacle of success, "Gutenberg lost control of his own creation," and "Fust became Mainz's second – and now predominant – printer."[36]

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[35] John Man, *The Gutenberg Revolution: The Story of a Genius and an Invention that Changed the World,* 125-126.

[36] Ibid., 126.

This was not the end of Johannes Gutenberg. Although he lost almost everything he had worked for, Gutenberg, still with the equipment and space at the Gutenberghof, continued to work and continued to print. In 1460, Gutenberg had printed the Latin encyclopedia called the Catholicon, which was more than likely the last major work associated with Gutenberg.

Johannes Gutenberg had a storied life and career, but one thing can be said about the risky and adventurous inventor, he created a new medium of communication that changed the course of human history. As Crowley and Heyer stated:

> Although we hesitate to argue for historical 'prime-movers,' certainly the printing press comes close to what is meant by this term. It was a technology that influenced other technologies—a prototype for mass production that impacted directly on the world of ideas by making knowledge widely available and by creating a space in which new forms of expression could flourish.[37]

Gutenberg pioneered a new form and a new medium that had revolutionary effects. Quoting James Burke, Crowley and Heyer stated, "Printing was to bring about the most radical alteration ever made in western intellectual history, and its effects were to be felt in every area of human activity."[38] After his death in 1468, the legacy of Gutenberg and the effects of his printing invention lived on and in less than sixty years played a defining role within the Protestant Reformation. R.W. Scribner quoted Elizabeth Eisenstein in his book, *For the Sake of Simple Folk*, where she stated:

> Printing laid many of the foundations on which the movement of religious reform was able to build, from vernacular Bibles and books of popular devotion, to clerical education and theological scholarship. Moreover, from the very beginning of Luther's revolt against the Church, the new religious ideas were made available to a reading public almost as soon as they were written.

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[37] David Crowley and Paul Heyer, *Communication in History: Technology, Culture, Society* (New York, NY: Longman Publishing, 1991), 80.

[38] David Crowley and Paul Heyer, 76.

As will be seen in the next section, the effects of Gutenberg's printing press had an incredible impact on the state of the church and society during the sixteenth century.

Martin Luther and the Beginnings of the Protestant Reformation

Unlike Gutenberg, Martin Luther, born in 1483, entered into a world that had known the glories of printing for the past thirty plus years. Although it was used throughout Germany, printing was not widely used during the early years of Luther's childhood, but by the turn of the century in 1500, there were over two hundred cities through Europe that had printing presses.[39]

Martin Luther grew up and was very well educated. He completed both his bachelors and masters degrees. It was in the summer of 1505 that Luther abandoned his studies in Law and went into the monastery.[40] While at the monastery Luther became a monk; however, he would not stay within traditional monastic life long. The Reformed Congregation of the Eremitical Order of St. Augustine sent Luther to study and he subsequently was made a priest and said his first mass in 1507.[41] Luther continued to study and teach, and in 1512 he was made doctor of theology and immediately joined the faculty at Wittenberg University.

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[39] Mark U. Edwards, Jr., *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 15.

[40] Mark Edwards and George Tavard, *Luther: A Reformer for the Churches* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1983), 24-25.

[41] Ibid., 25.

Luther's responsibility at Wittenberg was as a professor of Old Testament. One would often find Luther lecturing and teaching on the Bible. During the years of 1512-1518, Luther lectured and was given a great amount of responsibility to preach within the parish church at Wittenberg. It was not Luther's notoriety as professor and preacher that vaulted him to worldwide fame; rather it was his response and objection to a nearby sale of indulgences to the members of his church.[42]

Indulgences were related to the sacrament of penance. A sinful Christian, who was remorseful for the sins committed, would confess their sins to a priest, receive pardon, and then as Edwards and Tavard explained:

> . . . undertake the works of penance or satisfaction imposed by the priest. The works of satisfaction imposed on the penitent were limited, temporal penalties for the sins that, without the priest's absolution, would have condemned the individual to eternal punishment in hell.[43]

The works could be prayers, fasts, self-inflicted punishments, or pilgrimages. If someone failed to complete the works of satisfaction they would in turn suffer in purgatory for their omissions.[44]

The indulgences appeared late in the Middle Ages. An indulgence was no more than a small piece of paper with instruction and a papal seal on it. The purchased indulgence would free the repentant individual as Edwards and Tavard stated, from the "satisfaction he owed by drawing on the 'excess' merits of Christ and the saints to pay his

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[42] Mark Edwards and George Tavard, *Luther: A Reformer for the Churches* (Philadelphia, PA.: Fortress Press, 1983), 24-25..

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

'debt' to God."[45] Taking the selling of indulgences one step farther, the church began to offer indulgences to the living, as Edwards and Tavard discussed, for "those already in purgatory, thereby accelerating their journey to heaven."[46]

It is easy to understand why Martin Luther was upset when he found out during the summer of 1517 that indulgences were being sold to those within his parish. From Luther's perspective, his parishioners were misled and taken advantage of by John Tetzel, the seller of the indulgences. Edwards and Tavard detailed that by the fall of 1517, Luther sent a "humble but firm letter of protest to Archbishop Albrecht, enclosing with the letter a list of ninety-five theses on the power and efficacy of indulgences to show how problematic this sale of indulgences was."[47] Luther also sent a copy of the letter and theses to his own bishop, Jerome Shultze of Brandenburg. The intention of the theses was for academic debate and to bring about attention from a theological and pastoral standpoint. As Elizabeth Eisenstein stated in her book, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change,* "It was entirely conventional for professors of theology to hold disputations over an issue such as indulgences and 'church doors were the customary place for medieval publicity.'"[48] Thus, scholars do not believe that Luther's primary intent with the theses was to break away from the established church, nor to attack the papal authority.

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[45] Mark Edwards and George Tavard, 24-25.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Mark Edwards and George Tavard, 27-28.

[48] Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 306.

It is important to remember that Luther lived in an age that was quickly being transformed by the printing press. Therefore, by early 1518 his ninety-five theses were not only public, but had been translated into German and were being circulated throughout the empire. The details regarding the circulation of the theses are unknown, and scholars do not know who started the circulation, or when it originally began. However, regardless of the details, the circulation of the theses proved to be the catalyst that set the reformation in motion. Edwards and Tavard stated:

> Response was quick. Archbishop Albrecht sent the theses to Rome with a note suggesting that Luther was spreading 'new teachings.' Opponents, including John Tetzel, took up their pens to attack Luther, and the issue they seized on for their attack was not indulgences per se but the pope's power to grant indulgences. Against Luther's own wishes and expectation, the indulgence controversy was gradually transformed into a controversy over papal authority.[49]

Thus was the beginning of a disagreement that led to what is now called the Protestant Reformation. According to the history.com website the Protestant Reformation was:

> . . . the 16th-century religious, political, intellectual and cultural upheaval that splintered Catholic Europe, setting in place the structures and beliefs that would define the continent in the modern era.[50]

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[49] Mark Edwards and George Tavard, 28.

[50] History.com Staff, "The Reformation," History.com, Created 2002, accessed December 16, 2014, http://www.history.com/topics/reformation.

By 1520, Luther had published a series of treatises that, as Edwards and Tavard summarized:

> Spelled out his understanding of the true Christianity and attacked all the perversions that he believed the papacy, the antichrist, had introduced into the church. The three greatest of these treatises[51] were calls for renewal within Christianity and for resistance against papal tyranny.[52]

As revolutionary as the Reformation was, it was the way in which the movement and information spread that is most intriguing.

Luther never intended for such a movement and revolution to occur, but because of an invention some seventy years prior, Luther's humble letter and concern for his parishioners' spiritual salvation became a people's cry for change, reform, and revolution. As Elizabeth Eisenstein noted:

> The advent of printing was an important precondition for the Protestant Reformation taken as a whole; for without it one could not implement a 'priesthood of al believers.' At the same time, however, the new medium also acted as a precipitant. It provided 'the stroke of magic' by which an obscure theologian in Wittenberg managed to shake Saint Peter's throne.[53]

Effects of the Printing Press on the Reformation

In the opening statement in his book, *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther,* Mark Edwards, Jr. outlined exactly what the effects of the printing press were on not only the reformation, but also society as a whole during the sixteenth century:

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[51] The Three treatises were: To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate; On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church; and The Freedom of a Christian.

[52] Mark Edwards and George Tavard, 30.

[53] Elizabeth Eisenstein, 310.

> The reformation saw the first major, self-conscious attempt to use the recently invented printing press to shape and channel a mass movement. The printing press allowed Evangelical publicists to do what had been previously impossible, quickly and effectively reach a large audience with a message intended to change Christianity. For several crucial years, these Evangelical publicists issued thousands of pamphlets discrediting the old faith and advocating the new. In addition, they managed to accomplish this with little serious opposition from publicists of a Catholic persuasion.[54]

For the first time in history, the new medium of print culture was used on a massive scale to reach a larger and broader audience. One might even say that history saw the first major marketing campaign during the Reformation movement, with the chief marketing publicist being Martin Luther. Luther was not merely one publicist within a much larger grouping; he was the dominant publicist of his time. He dominated to a degree that no other person has ever dominated a major propaganda campaign and mass movement since.[55] Gutenberg, through the invention of the printing press, essentially equipped Martin Luther with a resource of printed material able to be mass-produced and distributed to the multitudes.

Luther had found a way to get his message out and into the hands of the people. In fact the Reformation was, as Eisenstein states: "the first movement of any kind, religious or secular, to use the new presses for overt propaganda and agitation against an established institution."[56] The reformation produced a grass roots effort when it came to disseminating the evangelical information created by Luther and his contemporaries. The information spread via small pamphlets. These pamphlets were easily handled materials

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[54] Mark U. Edwards, Jr., 1.

[55] Mark U. Edwards, Jr., xii.

[56] Elizabeth Eisenstein, 303-304.

that one could conceal or hide in a pocket or pack if necessary. [57] Edwards described these small handheld pamphlets as:

> The physical embodiment of a message. Multiplied by the art of printing into hundreds of exact copies, cheap to buy and handy to pass around, these pamphlets were in some sense what they contained: an address to the laity to become involved in an unprecedented way in their own religious destiny.[58]

Both the use of the pamphlets, and the idea of using the print medium to promote and propagate information, was not a new phenomenon. Since the advent of the printing press the German polemicists were using the technology to print propaganda for their own purposes; however what was new within the reformation was the sheer volume of propaganda used.[59]

In looking at numbers alone, there were an estimated 10,000 pamphlets that came off the presses from 1500-1530. Edwards stated that of the 10,000 pamphlets, "almost three-quarters appeared between 1520-1526, and most were due to the reformation movement. Martin Luther alone was responsible for approximately 20 percent of the overall total."[60] The message of the reformation was getting into the hands of the people, pamphlet by pamphlet.

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[57] Mark U. Edwards, Jr., 15.

[58] Ibid., 57.

[59] Ibid., 17.

[60] Ibid., 17.

Luther continued his massive printed publications until around 1530, where the numbers steadily decrease over time. The effect of the printed propaganda was already in full swing by 1530. The propaganda was such a powerful tool that the information had reached across all of Europe, and caused a separation between those who agreed with Luther (the Protestants), and those who opposed him (the Catholics).

As was noted above, scholars and critics have debated the role the printing press actually played within the Protestant Reformation. These debates will more than likely continue into the future as more information, which may still lay in ruin, is gathered. However, what can be concluded is that there was from 1517 to 1524 a forty-fold increase in the number of printed pamphlets, suggesting that scholars and critics may need to, as Edwards proposed:

> . . . moderate their skepticism about the role of print in reaching a large, primarily lay audience. . . . The conclusion seems inescapable: the printed word played a crucial role in the early Reformation, and when multiplied by the effects of preaching and conversation, can be said to be a major factor in spreading a relatively coherent message throughout the German-speaking lands.[61]

Thus, a forty-fold increase in printing production within a seven year period is hard to ignore and write off as inconsequential. The medium of print allowed Luther to mass-produce information and make it available to the everyday man and woman.

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[61] Mark U. Edwards, Jr., 172.

The Paradigm Shift

In his article on Biblical Megatrends, Tom Boomershine described paradigm shifts as something which:

> . . .occur when there is a failure in normal problem solving, when the results yielded by the old methods no longer work. This leads to thought experiments and to a proliferation of various articulations and willingness to try new approaches. Out of this comes a new gestalt, a primary shift in the way in which the material is perceived.[62]

Over five hundred years have passed since Gutenberg invented the printing press and altered the medium by which people communicate and disseminate knowledge. His invention resulted in the paradigm shift that was print culture. More than likely Gutenberg never envisioned the influence the printing press would truly have, nor could he have anticipated his supporting role in the Protestant revolution that saw a split within the established church.

For the past five hundred years the world has relied on print media and now we are in the midst of yet another cultural shift from print culture to digital. The digital world moves much faster than Gutenberg could ever have dreamed. Printed information in books, magazines, and newspapers is quickly becoming antiquated. For most people now living in the 21st century, the sending and receiving of information occurs instantly and digitally on televisions, radios, computers, smartphones, e-readers, tablets, or iPads. Students in school no longer need to carry around large stacks of books, but have thousands of books at their fingertips in small tablets they carry in one hand. People

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[62] Dr. Thomas Boomershine, "Biblical Megatrends: Towards a Paradigm for the Interpretation of the Bible in Electronic Media," *American Bible Society Symposium Papers on the Bible in the Twenty-First Century*, 209-30 (Philadelphia, PA: Trinity Press International, 1993).

sitting in the congregation on Sunday mornings can easily access the ancient scriptures with the use of an app on any electronic device. The digital world of communication is incredibly different than that of the printing press. The question the church now faces is how do they continue to communicate the ancient message of God, into the new paradigm of the ever-changing digital world? To begin answering the question, the church can take a page out of Martin Luther's approach.

Boomershine explained how in every age where there is a communication culture shift, there is an initial resistance to the new paradigm:

> The conservative response in each age is to resist the new culture generated by the new medium but to incorporate the medium into the old culture and its hermeneutics. . . . Protestantism adopted the new medium and its culture and developed a new synthesis that maintained essential continuity with the tradition.[63]

Luther did not shy away from print, but rather he embraced the new medium and saw the power of a printed world, and the effect it could have in presenting the message to the masses. The printing press, according to Boomershine, was a more, ". . . efficient and uniform way of producing written materials."[64] Luther not only recognized the efficiency of the printing press, he also acknowledged the significance of the paradigm shift that happened with a new print medium, and he leveraged the shift to the benefit of the church. Luther knew that in order to advance the gospel and the message of the church, risk was imminent, and a necessary shift in how information was presented.

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[63] Thomas Boomershine, "Biblical Megatrends: Towards a Paradigm for the Interpretation of the Bible in Electronic Media," *American Bible Society Symposium Papers on the Bible in the Twenty-First Century*, 209-30 (Philadelphia, PA: Trinity Press International, 1993).

[64] Ibid.

The church can learn much from Luther and his approach. Luther flooded the market with small pamphlets and images about the church and the message of God. Luther used the resources of the culture to his advantage when communicating his message.

There is definitely a difference between the medium of print communication and electronic communication. Boomershine acknowledged this difference when he stated with electronic communications there is: ". . . no paper needed, widely varied distribution systems, both audio and visual data, instant availability, and no required education to be perceived."

As different as electronic media is to that of print, the approach that Luther took with his mass marketing of information is not much different than what the church can do with social media and digital forms of marketing. The church has the opportunity to flood the digital news feeds with the message of God. Similar to Luther going outside the box and using the new method of print culture to further his message, the church can do the same by not ignoring the cultural norms of communication; instead the church can use the new medium of digital communication to further its message.[65]

Thomas Jefferson was correct; every generation does in fact need a revolution. Instead of relying on the past successes of the previous revolutions, the church needs to discover its role in the digital revolution that is already at hand and begin leveraging digital communication to further the message of God.

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[65] For more information on the use of social media and digital marketing, see Theoretical Foundations section.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

Introduction

Thomas Rainer, president and CEO of Lifeway Resources, stated in the forward to Alvin Reid's book, *Evangelism Handbook*:

> It is the best of times for evangelism in America, and it is the worst of times. It is the best of times because there is a high receptivity to the gospel. According to our research, four out of ten non-Christians in the United States would welcome a conversation about Jesus with a Christian. That means that over 60 million people who are lost and without hope would like to know how to be saved and filled with hope. What a great opportunity! What a mission field!
>
> But it's the worst of times as well. The American church is in serious decline. The passion for evangelism is less evident each year. Many church-going Christians will *never* share with an unbeliever the truth claims of the Savior. Never. Not one time. And many pastors and other church leaders are moving evangelism to the back burner of priorities. In fact, in one study we completed a few years ago, we found that 53 percent of senior pastors had not shared the gospel even one time n the previous six-month period.
>
> It is the best of times, and it is the worst of times. The mission field is filled with opportunities for the message of the gospel to be heard, received, and affirmed. But the American church is largely and sinfully silent.[1]

Those are terrifying statistics and haunting words. These are words that should prompt an immediate response from the church and a call to action for all believers. However, as William J. Abraham discussed in his book *The Logic of Evangelism*, there is a disconnect within western Christianity because we have, as Abraham writes, " . . . been a part of the

[1] Alvin Reid, *Evangelism Handbook* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2009), vii.

fabric of the west for so long that it has been assumed that Christians do not really need to evangelize."[2] Because of this disconnect, there are times the church seems to have lost our purpose, and forgotten the command from Jesus when he said: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded."[3]

Jesus' command to, "Go," has not changed in over two thousand years. We, as the church, remain tasked with the responsibility to reach out and evangelize to the nations the message of God. Irrespective of the method or the medium used in culture to communicate, God has continued to speak to humankind throughout the centuries.[4]

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[2] William J. Abraham, *The Logic of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1989), 4.

[3] Matthew 28:19, NIV.

[4] Even though the task and responsibility given to the church has not changed over the centuries, and the salvific message of God carries certain lines of continuity that have flowed throughout history, it is important to note that as culture and communication evolved so have certain theological ideals and content. As the ideals have evolved, there is a need to reconsider, as Marc Prensky suggested, ". . . our methodologies and content."[4]An example of this can be seen in the concept of Heaven and Hell. Let us take a moment to briefly look at the evolution of this concept.

Although there is no mention of the precise location of heaven and hell, nor is there a detailed explanation given of its appearance, there remains an understanding that both heaven and hell exist. Genesis speaks of God creating the heavens and the earth in vast array.[4] We also see numerous references made throughout the Old Testament of a place called heaven. Then in the Gospel of John, Jesus talks about his Father's house, and tells his disciples that he is going ahead of them to prepare a place for them.[4]

Within portions of the Old Testament we see references to hell or Sheol. In Psalm 139:8 David writes about making his bed in Sheol; and in Isaiah 14:15 we see the prophet stating: "But you are brought down to Sheol, to the depths of the pit." References to hell are also found in the New Testament. In Matthew 23:33 we see Jesus talking to the Pharisees when he says: "You snakes, you brood of vipers! How can you escape being sentenced to hell?" Again we see Jesus speaking this time in Luke 12:5, when he says: "But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell." These references led to the belief in the existence of heaven and hell, and also to some basic assumptions being made over the years.

It has been assumed over the years that heaven is a place somewhere above the sky where God and God's angels roam and kept a watchful eye upon the earth below. Heaven has been depicted in paintings and other images as a place filled with white cottony clouds, beauty, peace, streets made of gold, and harp playing angels guarding the entrance gate. It was not until scientists began to explore the outer reaches of the solar system that the concept of heaven was reconsidered. No longer was heaven seen as a place above the sky and clouds, because, according to scientists, NASA, and what we can all see, above the sky and clouds lies a vast space of endless darkness, shooting stars, comets, planets and black holes.
(Continued to next page)

In each of those moments the church has figured out a way and an appropriate method to proclaim this message. We are in the midst of one of the greatest shifts in communication since the advent of the printing press, the church is tasked in figuring out a new approach towards evangelism that takes the message of God and makes it suitable to the digital culture.

In order to achieve this it is important to have a grasp on what evangelism is, the purpose of it, as well as to look back into the halls of the church's history to those who have previously made impacts for the Kingdom.

Foundations for Evangelism

In order to discover what evangelism is, and the need for its use, it is important to look at where the term derived. Evangelism comes from the Greek verb, *euangelizomai,* meaning "'to bring or announce good news,' and the Greek from which we get our word gospel, *euangelion*, means simply 'good news.'"[5]

The assumptions of hell have been of a fiery and hot place beneath the earth. Hell has been depicted as a place where Satan and his demons rule and punish people who are evil on earth. Satan has a pitchfork and is often described as a figure who is terrifying and found to be wearing red. Once again as scientist and geologist discovered more about what was beneath the earth's surface, these assumptions of hell being down below were put into question. Where was hell to fit in the midst of the magma, iron, and nickel that were located over 1000 miles beneath the earth's surface? The continued discovery of the inner workings of the earth put the theory that hell was down below aside. The belief of the existence of heaven and hell have not necessarily changed throughout the centuries, however the concept of both heaven and hell have been adapted to fit a culture that evolved into space and geological exploration.

[5] William J. Abraham, *The Logic of Evangelism,* 41.

In both the Webster's Third International Dictionary and the Oxford English Dictionary define evangelism as the proclamation, preaching or promulgation of the gospel.[6] In his book, *The Logic of Evangelism*, Abraham stated:

> . . . the prevailing impression is that evangelism is basically the preaching of the Christian message to those who will hear. And this is underscored by the conventional image of the evangelist as an itinerant Christian worker who preaches the gospel and calls people to a commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.[7]

It is important to note that the proclamation, communication and preaching of the gospel is verbal: "Defining evangelism as the verbal proclamation of the gospel provides a clear, manageable concept that is rooted in the early history of the word and that calls the church to excellence in communicating the Christian gospel to those who are prepared to listen."[8]

Therefore, on the surface the task of the evangelist is "...to proclaim the gospel, to announce the good news of the kingdom and to communicate the message to as many as possible."[9] In other words, the purpose is to get the message of God out of the church and into the marketplace. Sounds easy enough, but this is only a surface level definition. Under the surface lie a myriad of other evangelism elements that encompass the nature and purpose of the evangelistic effort.

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[6] William J. Abraham, 41.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., 45.

[9] Ibid., 46.

Scott J. Jones in his book, *The Evangelistic Love of God and Neighbor: A Theology of Witness and Discipleship,* quoted David Barrett when he said:

> To "evangelize" is in fact an immensely complex process made up of a large variety of elements. It is multifaceted, pluriform, inclusive, and comprehensive. The term "evangelize" and its cognates are therefore words of tremendous complexity, like all other words that are rich in meaning.[10]

Because there are so many different elements we cannot place a broad label on evangelism and we cannot state that all evangelism is a mere proclamation of the gospel.

William J. Abraham, even though he proposed the basic understanding of evangelism as verbal proclamation, argues that the simple proclamation is not enough. There must be more to the evangelistic effort to make a lasting impact in the lives of people, both inside and outside the church. Abraham suggests the need for a radical shift in perspective and this attitude needs to move from verbal proclamation to deeper connections.[11] As Abraham stated, "We can best improve our thinking on evangelism by conceiving it as that set of intentional activities governed by the goal of initiating persons into the kingdom of God for the first time."[12]

Evangelism includes proclamation, but also an invitation towards a deeper understanding of who God is, as well as an introduction into the community of faith that will care and support. Better yet, evangelism needs to be thought of more as a lifestyle and a movement, and less of a technique and method easily implemented and replicated.[13] As Abraham stated, " . . . limiting evangelism to the mere proclamation of the gospel is

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[10] Scott J. Jones, *The Evangelistic Love of God and Neighbor: A Theology of Witness and Discipleship* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006), 23. Jones quoted David Barrett and his study of various forms of evangelism.

[11] William J. Abraham, 58.

[12] William J. Abraham, 95.

[13] Alvin Reid, 10.

artificial; rather, we should begin to enrich our conception of evangelism by expanding it to embrace crucial elements of Christian initiation."[14] In order to deepen the evangelistic reach into a community, it is of vital importance to go to where the people are, meet them there, and engage with them in their language and in their setting. Approaching evangelism in this manner is found to be far more effective than anything else.

John Wesley, the Evangelist

One such individual who understood the need for evangelism to be more than a mere proclamation of the gospel was John Wesley. To quote Abraham, "The conventional picture of Wesley is that of an itinerant preacher, proclaiming the good news of the gospel in the marketplaces of the British Isles."[15] However, there was much more to Wesley and his evangelism approach. Similar to the fact that it is unreasonable to define evangelism as the mere proclamation of the gospel, Wesley cannot be distinguished as a preacher who only proclaimed the good news. In fact, Abraham would argue that this typical image of Wesley is an incredibly inaccurate view: "Wesley was especially intent on not only proclaiming the gospel but seeing that those who responded were converted, established in the faith, incorporated into class meetings, and related to the local parish churches."[16] Wesley even went as far as discussing the need to only preach where there were societies able to connect and care for those who were

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[14] William J. Abraham, 55.

[15] Ibid., 54.

[16] Ibid.

interested.[17] At one point this was ignored and he and his preachers taught wherever the people were; however, by 1784, as Abraham described, ". . . they overturned this decision and refused to preach where they could not care for those who responded positively."[18]

Wesley was not always this broadly focused on evangelism. A good majority of his early ministry narrowly focused on evangelism as proclamation, not verbal, but written and published proclamation. It is important to take a step back and look at the early career of John Wesley in order to understand the development of his overall evangelism approach.

On February 9, 1709, John Wesley, at age six, had an experience that would shape him for the rest of his life. His family's home caught fire and young John was unable to get out of the burning home. It was not until two villagers worked together that he got out to safety. This event left an understandable mark on Wesley's life, and for him it became a sign that God's hand was upon him.[19] A. Skevington Wood stated in his book *The Burning Heart of John Wesley: The Evangelist*, "Increasingly he realized that he had been delivered for a purpose. He referred to himself in the words of Scripture as 'a brand plucked out of the fire' (Zechariah 3:2)."[20] This would not be the only time an event made a lasting impression on Wesley.

On May 24, 1738, John had an experience at Aldersgate church that left his heart "strangely warmed" and would forever change him. The experience at Aldersgate church was, as A. Skevington Wood stated:

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[17] William J. Abraham, 54.

[18] Ibid.

[19] A. Skevington Wood, *The Burning Heart John Wesley: Evangelist* (Lexington, KY: Emeth Press, 2007), 31.

[20] Ibid.

> The spiritual counterpart of his deliverance from the fire in 1709. But the imagery of burning not only expressed his own awareness of redemption from sin: it also typified the soul-saving mission to which he was divinely called. 'His theology translated itself into terms of that night scene,' explained W.H. Fitchett. 'The burning house was the symbol of a perishing world. Each human soul, in Wesley's thought, was represented by that fire-girt child, with the flames of sin, and of that divine and eternal anger which unrepenting [sic] sin kindles, closing round it. He who had been plucked from the burning house at midnight must pluck men from the flames of a more dreadful fire. That remembered peril coloured [sic] Wesley's imagination to his dying day.' This was the first step in the making of an evangelist.[21]

Wesley understood early on that he had been called and set apart. It was not until his heart-warming experience that John fully realized his calling. Until that point he was an evangelist in waiting, going through more of an incubation period of thirty years or so. It was within this incubation, or even maturation process, that John learned skills and techniques that would later form the basis for his methods, practices and ministry.

John's mother, Susanna, paid close and particular attention to him. Susanna intentionally trained him and instilled in him principles of religion and virtue.[22] As Wood wrote:

> It may well have been that his mother's weekly talks with the children convinced John that the opportunity for fellowship is essential to the Christian, and this led indirectly to the formation of the Holy Club at Oxford and, later, of the class meeting in Methodism. The gathering she held at the rectory (begun whilst Samuel was attending Convocation in 1712) may equally have brought to John's notice the value of such groups to supplement the normal services of the Church, and thus have paved the way for the founding of his societies. [23]

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[21] A. Skevington Wood, 32.

[22] Ibid., 33.

[23] Ibid.

These gatherings and weekly talks surely played a role, instilling in John a certain set of values and religious beliefs that aided his future ministries. In 1725, after some prodding from his mother, John was ordained a deacon and began his ministerial career.

He began preaching from town to town for about a year when he was elected as a Fellow of Lincoln College. It was at Lincoln College that he and his brother, Charles, started the Holy Club, which was more than a mere fellowship group. Wood has stated that the Holy Club, " . . . looked out as well as in. To devotional exercises was added charitable service amongst the underprivileged. Prisons and workhouses were visited. The sick and the poor were assisted."[24] The Holy Club provided a glimpse into the mind of Wesley and his approach towards those outside the church, but this approach would not fully materialize until a few years later.

The Holy Club was moving forward. Wesley continued to preach and teach in small churches, and he even formed small societies within the churches to help members care for one another by means of encouragement and accountability. However, Wesley was still missing an important piece to his evangelism. Albert Outler in his book *Evangelism and Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit,* stated:

> He was an obsessive-compulsive neurotic all his life and his religion never really cured his neurosis. He had an authoritarian temper—all too often imitated, without comparable results. Aldersgate had warmed his heart but had not taught him how to communicate the gospel or how to guide men into holiness.[25]

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[24] A. Skevington Wood, 39.

[25] Albert Outler, *Evangelism and Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit* (Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 1996), 18.

Admittedly, this was not the resume of someone who would transform the face of ministry from the eighteenth-century forward. Then in 1739, something happened that shifted Wesley's mindset, and ultimately his heart, towards all facets of evangelism. Outler described an event, which took place on April 2, 1739, that changed Wesley's focus from passion to *com*passion. It was on April 2nd that Wesley lowered his standards and entered into the arena of field preaching.

Before his field preaching began, Wesley's sermons were preached within a local church setting or written and published to be read by those within the Methodist societies. The purpose of the sermons were according to Outler, " . . . less for their conversion to Christ than for their doctrinal instruction in Christian truth and living."[26] When it came to the field preaching Outler described these sermons as:

> . . . a shattering experience for the Oxford don who had hitherto cared so much more about 'delivering his own soul' than about the needs and dispositions of other people.
>
> Monday, 2 – At four in the afternoon I submitted to be more vile and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation, speaking from a little eminence in the ground adjoining to the city to about three thousand people. The scripture on which I spoke (is it possible one should be ignorant that it is fulfilled in every true minister of Christ?) was, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.' (Journal, II 172-73)[27]

This was an experience that ultimately changed Wesley's perspective and theological approach to evangelism. Although this was not the first time he had preached on evangelism, as Wesley had published sermons on the same passage, Outler described that

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[26] Albert Outler, 19.

[27] Albert Outler, 18. Opening statement was given by Outler, who then quoted John Wesley from his Journal.

this, " . . . was almost the first time that anybody else had really *heard* these tidings for themselves in his preaching of them."[28] It was in his open-field, verbal preaching of the passage, in the context and setting of the people he was preaching to, that he saw first-hand what impact the message had on others. He went from a passionate zeal for preaching to a compassionate concern for the well being of others.[29]

From this point on, John Wesley had a burning passion, which led to his intense compassion, for preaching to anyone who needed to hear the Gospel message. His preaching was filled with grace and love, albeit sometimes a tougher form of grace and love than most were used to, but from the earliest moment of recollection Wesley knew he was loved by God unconditionally and chose to do God's work on earth. Because of that, he had but no other choice, than to do the same for those he met along the way. Wesley's emphasis on grace and love would go on to characterize his approach to evangelism and ministry. As A. Skevington Wood put it, "His goal was a mission to the masses . . . And in all his widespread journeying's he had only one desire: it was to lead men and women to Christ."[30]

Wesley would not let any place get in his way of preaching the gospel to men and women who were sinners in need of God's saving grace. He preached in large and small churches, stables, open fields, warehouses, in the open marketplace of the town, local assembly rooms, a shooting range, brickyard and even a beach. Wood stated:

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[28] Albert Outler, 19.

[29] Ibid.

[30] A. Skevington Wood, *The Burning Heart John Wesley: Evangelist*, 127.

> But with all this, it still remains the fact that by far the majority of Wesley's mission sermons were preached elsewhere than in a building designed for worship. His real pulpit was where the people were. His evangelism was not of the passive sort (if that is worthy of the name), which waits for unbelievers to come to church. His was essentially an outgoing ministry to take the gospel, as the Saviour did, to the man and woman in the street.[31]

Wesley took the gospel message to the people. He was not a one-dimensional preacher. One could find Wesley preaching inside a small church, in front of the coalmines and bars, or in a small band of brothers meeting in a Holy Club. In order to evangelize to the people, Wesley communicated in a way that was relevant and appropriate for them. In describing Wesley's style, Wood stated, "Wesley's style was marked by simplicity and sincerity. His sermons were meant for the people, and they were couched in language which the people could grasp."[32] He kept his content easily understandable, and his focus and purpose were, as Wood described, " . . . not to overshoot the congregation."[33]

Wesley quickly built a strong rapport with those who heard him preach and teach. He did not have the ability to send out mass marketing materials letting people know when and where he would be; rather people found out Wesley was coming via word of mouth and then came out in droves to hear him. The more he preached, the more he changed the lives of those who heard the gospel message. The more he changed lives, the more connected he felt with them. The more connected he felt, the more he wanted to care for their souls. Because of his deep concern for the souls of the new converts to the

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[31] A. Skevington Wood, 178.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

faith, Wesley created the Methodist societies to nurture the new Christians in the faith. Wherever the people were, Wesley and his ministers would go and preach to them.

As time went on, Wesley realized the importance of giving those hearing his message an opportunity to deepen their faith. Thus, Wesley resolved only to preach and teach where the societies were able to care for the people. As Wood stated, "What prompted the setting up of Wesley's organization was the care of souls. It was a direct outcome of evangelism."[34] Wesley's compassion for the souls of the new converts led him to want to seem them nurtured in their newfound faith. The process and approach to preaching and teaching accompanied by the efforts of the societies helped the new group of Methodists spring to life. John Wesley preached and continued to communicate the message of love and grace found only in a life with God until his death at the age of eighty-eight, in 1791.

A. Skevington Wood has observed, "Wesley achieved what must always be the first objective of an evangelist. He actually got in touch with the people, and managed to communicate his message to them."[35] The evangelist has no message if her/his message is irrelevant, complicated and misunderstood. The primary purpose of the evangelism is indeed the proclamation of the word of God, but as was noted above, this is not, nor cannot be, the only method to communicate with the people. Wesley, a great communicator, adapted his message to suit the audience. He was not afraid to go to great lengths to have his message heard by those who were not yet a part of the family of God. Finally, Wesley understood that the proclamation, personal connection and the care of souls were all necessary elements in effective evangelism.

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[34] A. Skevington Wood, 220.

[35] Ibid, 332.

Evangelism and the Church in the Digital Age

Many things have changed since John Wesley preached his first message in the open field on April 2, 1739. However, as we noted within the introduction of this chapter the task of evangelism has not changed in the two hundred and twenty-two years since John Wesley. The task and goal is still to proclaim the salvific message of God to those who do not know Jesus, connect with them, and then invite them into the kingdom. As was also noted within in the chapter introduction, even though the task of evangelism and overarching message of God is the same, in the digital age, a different method of communicating is necessary.

Just as Wesley adapted his method of communicating when he began open-air preaching, the church needs to adapt their method of communicating the message to suit the culture within which they are preaching. We cannot continue to preach a Gutenberg-Style message to a Twitter, Google, Facebook and iPhone audience. The processes of understanding are drastically different. If we expect the audience to understand the message we are communicating, we need to understand the culture in which we are preaching and evangelizing. This is where John Wesley remains relevant. He understood in order to get the message of God across to his audience, his method had to change with to fit the people and culture.

Therefore, one way to communicate is to go to where the people are, learn their language, and proclaim the message of God in a manner they will understand. If taken to heart in the twenty-first-century, that means the church needs to enter the digital sphere

and begin communicating the message of God on Facebook pages, in 140 characters or less on Twitter, or through images and short fifteen to thirty second videos on Instagram. If the church is going to engage and connect with people where they are, then we need to be online, appearing in the news feeds and streams of social media, and intentionally creating high-quality and creative content.

John Wesley never saw the impact of digital technology, but if digital technology had been available during his time, Wesley would probably have used it to leverage his purpose of evangelism to communicate to an even broader audience. Similar to the approach[36] of Martin Luther during the protestant reformation, John Wesley communicated his message passionately, appropriately, and effectively to a wide variety of people; the church of the twenty-first-century can learn from both their approaches.

The world of today is saturated with vivid and dynamic digital marketing content, the rise of social media, the ability to network and connect with individuals all over the world, and an online world that affords persons the ability to have their fifteen minutes of fame instantaneously. These components of the digital age lead to opportunities for the church to evangelize the message of God daily, and through multiple mediums that are present in the digital culture.

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[36] See Historical Foundations chapter, specifically page 61-63, paragraph two for more information on Martin Luther's approach.

Another aspect of what the church can learn from John Wesley was his passion for connecting the new converts to a church or society. Just as evangelism is more than mere proclamation, the church cannot use the various forms of digital communication, social media, digital marketing, video and images, etc., in a single dimension. These digital modes of communication must be used multi-dimensionally in order to effectively evangelize and reach the culture.

The church's evangelistic efforts must lead towards some form of discipleship, which was a foundational concept for Wesley. He realized that his task was not complete simply because he preached a good message. Wesley understood it was meaningless to proclaim the message of Jesus if there was nothing to aid the individual in growing spiritually beyond the point of proclamation. The spiritual growth of the individual was one reason Wesley was so concerned with connecting them to a local church or society.

Regardless of the evangelistic efforts, the church needs to take the additional step to create models of discipleship to function right alongside the evangelistic efforts. It is necessary to leverage the digital evangelistic efforts to connect with people, share the message and invite them into the kingdom. Evangelism goes beyond the proclamation. It extends into the post-worship conversations, whether face-to-face or digitally, and then throughout the week.

Through the medium of digital technology, the church has a tremendous opportunity to reach far more people than John Wesley could have ever imagined. Wood concluded his epilogue with these words:

> To have been reminded of one who bridged the gap in a bygone century should confirm the conviction that it can still be done today. The population explosion daily increases the magnitude of the mission. But the God who raised up Wesley and his colleagues can call out a taskforce in our time too. That He may do so with similar effect must surely be the prayer of every Christian.[37]

May we continue to search out digital ways to evangelize the message of God to a people speaking a digital language. May the church, like John Wesley, carry on the message to those who do not yet know the story and bridge the gap between printing press inventor Johann Guttenberg and former Apple, Inc. CEO Steve Jobs.

[37] A. Skevington Wood, 335.

CHAPTER FIVE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Introduction

There were an estimated 313 million people in the United States as of the year 2012.[1] Of those 313 million people, an estimated eighty[2] million people were born between the years 1978 – 2000[3], which is around 25% of the United States population. No other generation within the United States carries that high of a percentage of the overall population. This generation of individuals is known as millennials. Eric Greenberg in his book, *Generation We,* said of the millennial generation:

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[1] "U.S. World Population Clock", Census Bureau, accessed December 22, 2013, http://www.census.gov/popclock/. This number fluctuates with one birth on average every 8 seconds, one death every 12 seconds, one international migrant every 40 seconds, leaving a net gain of one person about every 16 seconds within the US.

[2] Dan Schawbel, *Time Magazine,* "Millennials vs. Baby Boomers: Who Would You Rather Hire?," accessed Dec. 22, 2013, http://business.time.com/2012/03/29/millennials-vs-baby-boomers-who-would-you-rather-hire/.

[3] These dates are speculated by various sources as well. Some have the millennial generation at 1980-2000 or 1982-2004. Therefore the overall number of millennials within the US can vary based on the years used. However, it is typical to use the 1980-2000 or 1984-2004 years when discussing the millennial generation.

> The Millennials are a special generate\on, potentially the greatest generation ever. They are not pessimistic or vengeful. Rather, they are sober in their view of the world. They believe in technology and know they can innovate themselves out of the mess they are inheriting. They believe in entrepreneurship and collective action, and that each person *can* make a difference. They are about plenitude, and they reject cruelty. They are spiritual, responsible, tolerant, and in many ways more mature than their predecessor generations. They reject punditry and bickering, because they are post-partisan, post-ideological, and post-political. Most important, they believe in the greater good and are ready to dedicate themselves to achieving it.[4]

The millennial generation, although still comparatively young, is the generation with immediate up and coming influence; the church needs not to dismiss this generation. Marc Prensky, in 2001, coined the terms digital natives and digital immigrants, in his article, *Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants*. A digital immigrant is someone who spent most of his or her life outside of digital culture, or as Prensky described, "those of us who were not born into the digital world but have, at some later point in our lives become fascinated by and adopted many or most aspects of the new technology . . . "[5] Digital natives are those individuals who are, as he also describes, " . . . native speakers of the digital language of computers, video games and the internet."[6] Millennials are considered digital natives, with a few that fall into more of the digital immigrant status.

Millennials have never known life outside digital culture. They grew up with many digital technology options: televisions (multiple in their homes), telephones (both landline and mobile), music that transitioned from 8-Tracks to mp3 audio files listened to on smart phones and mp3 players, the Internet, the resurgence of Apple, Inc., the creation

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[4] Eric Greenberg, *Generation We*, (Emeryville, CA: Pachatusan, 2008), 6.

[5] Marc Prensky, "On the Horizon," *MCB University Press*, Vol. 9 No. 5, (October 2001), accessed December 17, 2014, http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky%20.

[6] Ibid.

of Google, the rage of digital chat rooms and communities, and then the introduction of social media with the start of MySpace and quickly thereafter Facebook. All these digital technology changes happened before most millennials[7] even graduated college.

Digital technology is not only an integral part of the millennials' every day life, it is how they communicate and connect with the people and world around them. Leonard Sweet, in his book, *Viral: How Social Networking is Poised to Ignite Revival,* described the millennials as the " . . . digitized, globalized group that spends much of its life getting to know one another in a virtual world." It is millennials who have found a way to connect and build relationships better than any other generation. In their search to connect within the digital framework, millennials, as Sweet observes, " . . . have rewritten the rules of forming networks, connection, and relationships."[8]

As noted previously in this discussion, the world has changed. As the world has changed so have the methods of communication. What began as an oral form of communication in the earlier centuries, eventually shifted to what is now called the digital age of communication; we will discuss this shift in more detail later in this chapter.

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[7] Please note that for the remainder of this section the terms Millennial and Digital Native will be used interchangeably.

[8] Leonard Sweet, *Viral: How Social Networking is Poised to Ignite Revival* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBook Press, 2012), 6.

Therefore, when thinking through the processes of connecting, communicating with, and reaching out to the millennial generation, perhaps the church should consider Marc Prensky's suggestion to ". . . reconsider both our methodologies and our content."[9] In understanding we cannot continue to live off the past success of the church, it is time to forge new pathways into the future. Simply reconsidering the methodologies and content does not mean a complete abandonment of the previous forms. Rather what this suggests is an adaptation of the previous methods to suit the needs of the culture and make the evangelistic work of the church more effective and efficient.

For example, abandoning methodologies of reading, writing, the use of printed material and lectures, is removing part of the fabric of society; these methods play an integral part of our everyday lives. Therefore, we do not need to abandon these methods, but rather adapt them to suit the culture. Thus, rather than reading printed books, magazines, or newspapers, technology makes it possible to read on electronic devices such as tablets, e-readers, iPads, computers, smartphones, etc. Instead of hand writing out messages and notes, we can open up our computers and type the message out, or pull out any smartphone, open up the text message app and send a text note to someone. One of the biggest methodology adaptations within recent years is the use of the Internet to host virtual classrooms. No longer do individuals need to be physically present to hear a classroom lecture or be "in class;" they can open up their computers, navigate to the website and sign-on to the class lecture.

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[9] Marc Prensky, "On the Horizon," *MCB University Press*, Vol. 9 No. 5, (October 2001), accessed December 17, 2014, http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky%20.

Prensky also mentioned that the content needed to be reconsidered. Again, understanding that certain lines of continuity do exist within the message of God, as culture changes and evolves, the presentation of the content needs to adapt. What does this mean? This means that when envisioning reaching the millennials, the information presented and communicated needs to be faster, multi-dimensional, and dynamic; and the content needs to be authentic, engaging, creative, extremely interactive, and highly relational and social.

Dust Off Those History Books

David Crowley and Paul Heyer described communication in their book, *Communication in History: Technology, Culture, Society*, as, "an exchange of information and messages. It is an activity."[10] In other words, communication is the ability to convey a message across multiple mediums and platforms. The conveyance of the message has occurred through oral communication, written communication, and print communication. Regardless of the medium, people have figured out how to communicate and how to convey a message to one another. The world of the twenty-first century, however, finds itself in one of the fastest evolving communication cultures ever; it is known as the digital age. The medium upon which communication within the digital age is conveyed can change in an instant. However, before fast-forwarding to the digital age, it is important to provide a brief review of how communication got to this point.

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[10] David Crowley and Paul Heyer, *Communication in History: Technology, Culture, Society* (White Plains, NY: Longman Publishing, 1991), 7.

The conveyance of a message began over one hundred thousand years ago with oral communication. Crowley and Heyer explained how our, " . . . ancestors communicated though nonverbal gestures and an evolving system of spoken language."[11] Sounds eventually evolved into words, which could then be passed on throughout the generations with stories. Until scriptures were written down, most of the biblical history was based on oral communication. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 states:

> Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.[12]

Within the biblical history there was the understanding that the commandments were passed on to the next generations; this passing on happened orally through the stories told. The Jewish people knew that, if their ancestry and history were to continue, the story of their heritage and the message of God had to be communicated to their children, grandchildren and so forth. Oral communication dominated the culture and the very way of life until around 3300 B.C.

William Fore stated in his book, *Mythmakers: Gospel, Culture and the Media that,* " . . . about 3300 B.C., a major change in human communication occurred. Someone, or perhaps some people, invented a system of representing oral speech in visual form: writing."[13] Pictures became forms of words or symbols that were constructed

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[11] David Crowley and Paul Heyer, 7.

[12] Deuteronomy 6:4-9, NRSV.

[13] William Fore, *Mythmakers: Gospel, Culture and the Media* (New York, NY: Friendship Press, 1990), 30.

to form thoughts and ideas.[14] Symbols eventually became alphabets that could represent "all the sounds of speech."[15] People began to write and this writing changed the way people thought, but ultimately it changed how communication was transmitted. People wrote information, ideas, thoughts, stories, and memories down. As new and innovative as this communication was, it still had its limitations. The time it took to write or copy was incredible, which meant mass communication still relied on oral communication. What happened in the 1450's forever changed the face of communication with the invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg.

Gutenberg's invention would not be kept silent for long. Print communication exploded and became the norm by which people conveyed messages from "happy birthday" to important news information. Printed communication was *the* form of communication for over four hundred years. Then came 1831 the year the communication culture experienced the beginning of a communication paradigm shift from print culture towards electronic and digital culture.

According to today's standards the scientific work done by Joseph Henry is far from electronic and digital, as we understand the terms in the year 2015. However, in 1831 his work with electromagnetism was ground breaking and created a domino effect that would open the door for further electronic and digital communication inventions. The Smithsonian Institute Archives[16] stated:

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[14] William Fore, 30.

[15] Ibid.

[16] "Electromagnetism," Smithsonian Institute Archive, accessed January 5, 2015, http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/henry/electromagnetism#c5.

> Henry was an innovative teacher whose interest in the relatively new field of electromagnetism, combined with his belief in the importance of demonstrating scientific phenomena to his students, led him to develop electromagnets that were far more powerful than any previously made. Using these electromagnets to demonstrate both dramatic and subtle effects to his students and to explore electromagnetism in the laboratory, he developed the first motor based on magnetic attraction and repulsion (a forerunner of a modern DC or direct current motor) and a primitive form of the electromagnetic telegraph.[17]

Although full credit for the invention of the telegraph cannot be attributed to Henry, as Samuel Morse took further developments in creating the first commercial telegraph to send coded signals and messages along long lines of electrically charged wires, Henry played an important role in the advancement and design of Morse's eventual telegraph. In his article for the Smithsonian Institute Archives titled, *Joseph Henry: Inventor of the Telegraph?,* PhD David Hochfelder stated:

> . . . most importantly, Gale urged Morse to read Henry's 1831 paper in Silliman's Journal, which described these improvements. After using a twenty-element series battery and an electromagnet of several hundred turns, Morse and Gale were able to record messages through ten miles of wire. This success emboldened Morse to reveal his invention to the world. He demonstrated his telegraph publicly for the first time on September 2, 1837; solicited government support from the secretary of the Treasury a few weeks later; and filed a caveat with the Patent Office at the beginning of October. [18]

Henry's pioneering work combined with Morse's developments of the telegraph proved to be a pivotal point in communication's history.

The telegraph provided the world with the opportunity to send and receive a message within minutes, rather than waiting on the piece of information to come through the mail or by messenger. When Morse sent his first message over the telegraph the

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[17] Joseph Henry, "Statement of Professor Henry in Relation to the History of the Electro-Magnetic Telegraph," appendix to *Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution for the Year 1857* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1858), 99.

[18] David Hochfelder, "Joseph Henry: Inventor of the Telegraph?," Smithsonian Institute Archives, accessed January 5, 2015, http://siarchives.si.edu/oldsite/siarchives-old/history/jhp/joseph20.htm.

communication revolution began and would, over the course of the next one hundred and seventy-nine years, provide the pathway for the most significant communication changes the world had witnessed since Gutenberg's printing press. In fact, in those one hundred and seventy-nine years more than one-half of all major developments in communication technology have taken place, which is an incredible rate of cultural change. [19]

Communication continued to advance in the age of electronic technology. The late 1800's saw the invention of the telephone by Alexander Graham Bell (1876), which extended the communication reach of the culture even farther than the telegraph. The turn of the century saw the development of commercial radio (1920), which allowed information to be mass broadcasted over the radio waves. People could now listen to stories, music, religious messages and breaking news from their homes. Then in 1925 culture saw yet another significant technological advancement within the age of electronic communication, the television.

The television changed the manner in which information was communicated, received, accepted and used. In light of the advance in technology with the television, William Fore gave an on point assessment of the situation:

> TV had radio's immediacy and reach into every home. It had the picture magazines' ability to encapsulate events in pictures. It had the movies' ability to tell stories. Television could go anywhere, cover anything. It could speed events up and slow them down. It could magnify the atom and miniaturize the world. It could speak to us, tell us stories, be with us – any time of the day or night.
>
> Yes, the nature of communication technology has always had a major effect on culture. Yet technology only produces tools; it is up to human beings to decide *how* to incorporate those tools into the culture. [20]

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[19] See Appendix B for the complete list of the events.

[20] William Fore, *Mythmakers: Gospel, Culture and the Media* (New York, NY: Friendship Press, 1990), 36

Just as TV had radio's immediacy, the forthcoming digital age of communication, with the advent of the Internet and social media, has the tools produced from electronic technology to communicate a message to a wider audience, at a much faster rate than TV ever could.

The Digital Age

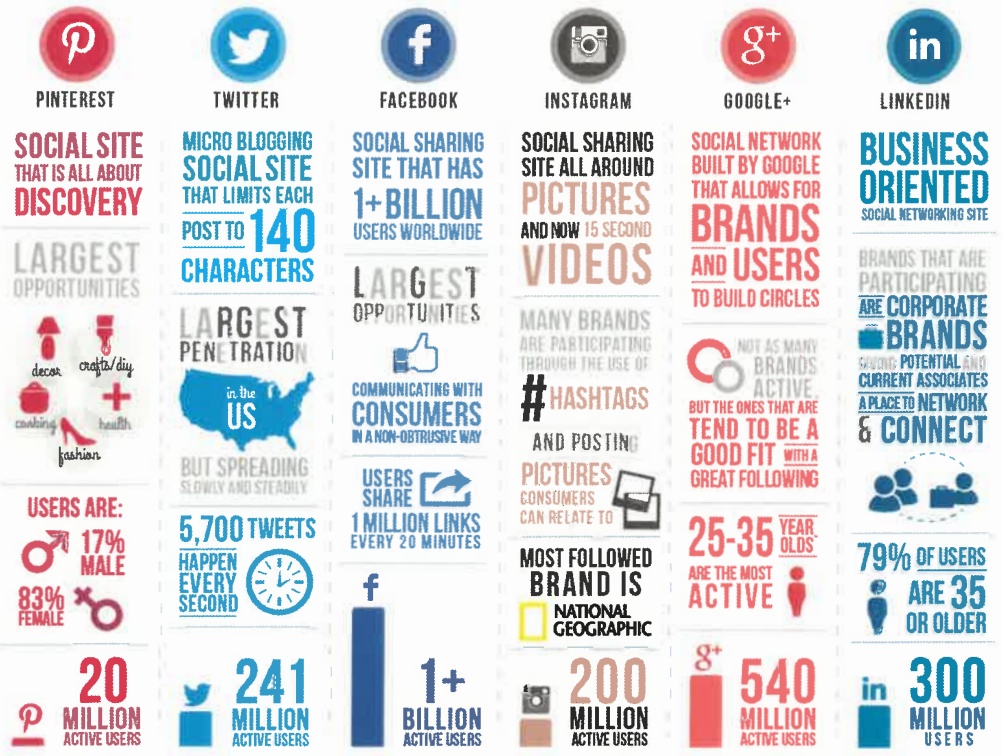
As electronic technology evolved into a more digital form, so did communication. This shift from electronic to digital technology saw an evolution in the types of mediums used to communicate. What began with the telegraph and telephone, morphed over the years into instant opportunities to communicate via the Internet, email, texting, and social media to communicate with one another, next-door, or halfway across the world. Millennials connect with one another in ways that no other generation has ever done before. Technology within the digital age is the medium primarily used to connect one person to another, through whatever ways possible (television, smartphone, website, social media, video, music).

Take for example the social networking site Twitter. On Twitter's discover webpage, in large bolded letters is the phrase, "Connect with People." Below that is a brief, 140-character statement, "At the heart of Twitter are short messages called Tweets. Strike up conversations with people you know and people you'd like to know."[21] Twitter connects people; that is its primary mode of operation. Not only does Twitter connect people with each another, the social network exists for people to connect with those individuals they have relationships with, those they are familiar with, and those they can network and get to know. Twitter connects people, creates and builds new relationships, and extends networks of people, organizations, and businesses across the globe.

Less than twenty years ago in order to connect with someone from Europe, an international phone call had to be made, or a piece of mail, stamped and shipped, had to be sent. Now, type in "Europe" into Twitter's "discovers section," and within a matter of seconds thousands of possible connections can be made with individuals all over the world who have associated themselves with "Europe". Twitter is merely one example of how digital culture is impacting and influencing the way in which people communicate and connect with one another. There are many other social networks. Take a look at the infographic in Figure 1 on the next page from Leverage New Age Media showing a few additional social media sites.

[21] "The Story of a Tweet," Twitter.com, accessed December 23, 2013, https://discover.twitter.com/?utm_source=help&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=seo.

Figure 1


PINTEREST
SOCIAL SITE THAT IS ALL ABOUT DISCOVERY
LARGEST OPPORTUNITIES
decor
crafts/diy
cooking
health
fashion
USERS ARE:
17% MALE
83% FEMALE
20 MILLION ACTIVE USERS
TWITTER
MICRO BLOGGING SOCIAL SITE THAT LIMITS EACH POST TO 140 CHARACTERS
LARGEST PENETRATION
in the US
BUT SPREADING SLOWLY AND STEADILY
5,700 TWEETS HAPPEN EVERY SECOND
241 MILLION ACTIVE USERS
FACEBOOK
SOCIAL SHARING SITE THAT HAS 1+ BILLION USERS WORLDWIDE
LARGEST OPPORTUNITIES
COMMUNICATING WITH CONSUMERS IN A NON-OBTRUSIVE WAY
USERS SHARE 1 MILLION LINKS EVERY 20 MINUTES
1+ BILLION ACTIVE USERS
INSTAGRAM
SOCIAL SHARING SITE ALL AROUND PICTURES AND NOW 15 SECOND VIDEOS
MANY BRANDS ARE PARTICIPATING THROUGH THE USE OF #HASHTAGS
AND POSTING PICTURES CONSUMERS CAN RELATE TO
MOST FOLLOWED BRAND IS NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
200 MILLION ACTIVE USERS
GOOGLE+
SOCIAL NETWORK BUILT BY GOOGLE THAT ALLOWS FOR BRANDS AND USERS TO BUILD CIRCLES
NOT AS MANY BRANDS ACTIVE, BUT THE ONES THAT ARE TEND TO BE A GOOD FIT WITH A GREAT FOLLOWING
25-35 YEAR OLDS ARE THE MOST ACTIVE
540 MILLION ACTIVE USERS
LINKEDIN
BUSINESS ORIENTED SOCIAL NETWORKING SITE
BRANDS THAT ARE PARTICIPATING ARE CORPORATE BRANDS
POTENTIAL AND CURRENT ASSOCIATES A PLACE TO NETWORK & CONNECT
79% OF USERS ARE 35 OR OLDER
300 MILLION USERS
Statistics as of 4.25.2014 Designed by: Leverage - leveragenewagemedia.com

22

Through the various social network sites, whether they are character based like Twitter and Facebook, or image/video based like Instagram, social networks offer elements of connectedness. So the question is then, what does this all mean and what does it have to do with the church?

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[22] Social Media Comparison Infographic, *Leverage New Media Blog, Created 2013,* accessed, December 6, 2014, https://leveragenewagemedia.com/blog/social-media-infographic/ (Blog Editors Note: Cont. 226 "We will attempt to keep this updated roughly every six months. Check back for updated statistics. All previous versions are archived at the end of this article." Statistics may vary with the rate of change.

It is Time to Fly

Erin Hanson, a nineteen-year-old writer from Australia wrote in a recent poem these words:

> There is freedom waiting for you,
> On the breezes of the sky,
> And you ask, "What if I Fall?"
> Oh, but my darling,
> What if you fly?[23]

There is often a fear of the unknown. This fear comes from not wanting to fail because there exists a lack of knowledge. This fear also comes from a reluctance to take a leap of faith, and risk falling. When fear is permitted to triumph, we surrender our ability to fly and we miss out on the freedoms that are found in the sky. The church is in a great position to take the digital leap and fly. We have the resources available that allow us to explore the digital skies; we just have to be willing to take the leap.

The pre-digital world is comfortable; it is what we know and are accustomed to, and it is not just the church that falls prey to comfortableness. In the book *Digital Minds:12 Things Every Business Needs to Know About Digital Marketing*, Husam Jandal stated:

> The many businesses that are choosing not to use social – mainly because they don't understand it – are going to regret their refusal to adapt. The key to unlocking the value of social media is embracing it and finding a way to make it work for your business.[24]

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[23] Erin Hanson, *The Poetic Underground*, accessed January 5, 2015, http://thepoeticunderground.com/tagged/poetry.

[24] Husam Jandal et al., *Digital Minds:12 Things Every Business Needs to Know About Digital Marketing* (Victoria, BC: FriesenPress, 2013), 6.

One of the biggest issues facing both the business world and the church is the tendency to communicate, market and operate out of a pre-digital world to a group of individuals who speak an entirely different language.[25] Instead of running the risk of dismissing the millennial generation, and potentially all those who come after, we must be willing to learn the new language of the digital culture so we can continue communicating the message appropriately and effectively. In short, we must not be afraid to enter the digital world nor can we be afraid to fall; but rather it is time to embrace this new medium of the digital culture and get ready to fly.

Leonard Sweet outlined a few key elements on how the church can begin the process of flying, through learning from the millennials, in his book, *Viral: How Social Networking is Poised to Ignite Revival*. Sweet first suggested to "get a campfire story." Or in other words, "your church needs to become more tribal, more local, more pedestrian, more artisanal."[26] If our churches do not look like the communities we surround, then we are not doing the work of Jesus. Jesus was incarnational; he came and moved into the neighborhood. The church is called to be incarnational as well within the community and culture around us. Therefore, if we want to remain relevant and effective we must immerse ourselves within the culture and learn how to tell the stories of the gospel to the people within our own zip code. Sweet stated, "Decontextualize the global; contextualize the local and make it tribal. The church must love and live its zip code."[27]

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[25] Marc Prensky, "On the Horizon," *MCB University Press*, Vol. 9 No. 5, (October 2001), accessed December 17, 2014, http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky%20.

[26] Leonard Sweet, *Viral: How Social Networking is Poised to Ignite Revival* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBook Press, 2012), 194.

[27] Leonard Sweet, 195.

Second, Sweet suggested the church must "mean the meaning." Millennials can find facts in an instant, but facts are just that, facts. Millennials thrive on facts with actual meaning behind them. They want to know *why*, and they want to know what the church is going to do about the *why*. Millennials, as Sweet described, "Hunger for something more than they are, a meaning behind themselves, the reality behind all realities. In this culture, it is more important than ever to mean the meaning."[28]

Simon Sinek in his book, *Start With Why,* stated, "Every single person has a WHY and every single organization has one too. An organization, don't forget, is one of the WHAT's, one of the tangible things a founder or group of founders has done in their lives to prove their WHY."[29]

Millennials want to know the WHY behind an organization, and they want to hear this message authentically. They want to know the church genuinely cares about what goes on in the world, society, culture, and in their own lives. Millennials want to see the church connecting with the community and paying attention to the needs of the people on the outside of the doors. They long to see the church live out the Gospel of Jesus, not just give historical facts and empty words; we need to tell them WHY we do what we do, and WHY we exist. We, the church, need to communicate effectively to all generations, and especially the "meaning seeking" Millennials, WHY Jesus.

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[28] Leonard Sweet, 195.

[29] Simon Sinek, *Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action* (New York: Penguin Group, 2009), Kindle Locations, 214-215.

Third, Sweet suggests that we, ". . . give up the control." Millennials do not necessarily want the control; they just want to know they are free from being marionettes. This generation seeks, as Sweet writes " . . . resources that will help them in their journey toward the things they value, hunger for, and seek after. They want to be resourced."[30] It is important that those within the church understand that in order to effectively resource millennials one needs to, according to Sweet, " . . . take into account their learning style and learn to contextualize your own...Suffice it to say that in a Google world, you don't standardize, you customize."[31] This is similar to the thoughts of Marc Prensky when he suggested that the way in which we educate digital natives is different than the way that the digital immigrants were taught.

The culture has changed and the digital natives learn differently, and in order to teach them in a way they will understand, they must be taught in a digital framework. Prensky did not say that the learning of the digital immigrants was bad, but it was appropriate for the immigrants when they were learning. That model will not work, across the board, with the digital natives. They speak a different language, a language the digital immigrants need to learn in order to teach effectively and have the digital natives get the most out of their education.

Ministry to the digital natives, or Millennials, needs to function similarly. Ministry within the digital age is not a plug and play system. There is not a "one-size fit all" ministry model or approach to evangelism and communication. The church cannot

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[30] Leonard Sweet, 195-196.

[31] Ibid., 196.

continue to rely on the past success to propel it into the future.[32] Therefore, in order to best communicate and reach the millennial generation, we need to begin functioning out of a digital framework rather than a pre-digital mindset.

Going back to Sweet's first point, the church must love and live the zip code we are in as well as the current age we are in. Therefore, we must customize the language and the ministry efforts to effectively communicate within the digital age and reach the millennial natives, who at times are getting restless with the church.

Fourth, Sweet suggests, setting "Jesus free from the page. . . . Just as the Protestant Reformation was a revolution in reading among European especially how they read the Bible, so the TGIF revolution will entail a whole new reading of the Bible that exegetes images and stories as much as words and points."[33] The church must find new ways of interpreting the stories; otherwise those stories will be lost and Jesus will remain entombed within the pages of a book.[34]

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[32] See Lovett Weems' book, *Focus: The Real Challenges that Face the United Methodist Church.* He discusses the dangers of the paradox of success and how those within the church fall into the trap of having success in the past and applying those patterns of success in the future.

[33] Leonard Sweet, 196.

[34] Leonard Sweet, 197.

The good news is the church does not have to look far to seek out new approaches to reading and interpreting the stories within the biblical narrative. If attention is paid to the culture and zip code, as Sweet described, then the answers are within the culture itself. The key is to learn the language of the culture and then interpret and approach the biblical stories in that manner. The language of the current culture is digital. Not only is the language digital, but also it is highly social media[35] driven.

No longer is the use of digital communication a fad or the latest trend everyone is waiting to see fade into the past. Digital communication is just the opposite because it has become part of the fabric of daily interaction. One of the ways in which culture communicates digitally, as we have noted, is through social media.

Past TEDx Speaker and *Socialnomics* Author Erik Qualman stated, "Social Media isn't a fad, it's a fundamental shift in the way we communicate…We don't have a choice on whether we do social media. The choice is how well we do it."[36]

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[35] See Glossary of Terms for definition.

[36] Diane Hughes, "Social Media – A Great Video with some Surprising Stats!" *Dianehughesdotcom Blog,* accessed December 6, 2014, http://dianehughesdotcom.wordpress.com/2013/06/26/social-media-a-great-video-with-some-surprising-stats/.

In order to fully comprehend the impact of digital communication and social media on the culture consider these statistics from Erik Qualman:

1. 1 Billion People are on Facebook making it the third largest country in the world
2. 53% of Millennials would rather lose their sense of Smell than their Technology
3. Social Media has become the #1 activity on the web
4. 1 in every 5 couples meet online
5. 93% of marketers use social media for business
6. Every 60 seconds 72 hours of video footage is uploaded to YouTube
7. The :06 Vine is the new :30 commercial
8. "Selfie" is now a word in Webster's Dictionary
9. 92% of children under the age of two have a digital shadow
10. More people own a mobile device than a toothbrush[37]

The previous ten statistics are a mere glimpse of the reach social media has had in the past decade. Social Marketers predict that these numbers will only continue to rise. So what do all these statistics mean? These statistics tell us people are speaking a digital language, and living in a highly social media driven world waiting for someone to communicate with them. In fact, one of the greatest qualities of digital and social media is the opportunity to reach a vast and diverse audience quickly. Moreover, when information is communicated on social media the reach of that information is almost doubled immediately.

[37] Erik Qualman, "39 Social Media Stats to Start 2012," Socialnomics: World of Mouth Blog, created January 2012, accessed December 6, 2014, http://www.socialnomics.net/2012/01/04/39-social-media-statistics-to-start-2012/.

Take, for instance, a sermon given on a Sunday morning. Hypothetically speaking, on any given Sunday, a church may have fifty individuals participating in worship within the church building. Statistics tell us that of those fifty, thirty-five are participants on some form of social media.[38] According to pewresearch.com, " . . . half of all Facebook users have more than 200 friends."[39] Granted this is an average however, a sermon given to fifty people, through the use of social media, has the potential to reach 7,000 people just on Facebook alone. Those numbers increase the more social networks people communicate on.

There is power and opportunity found in the online world of social media. We are left then to answer the following question: how do we communicate the biblical stories, and as Leonard Sweet suggested, free Jesus from the page[40] in the digital culture? Already there are hundreds of electronic and digital translations of the bible on programs, websites, and electronic device applications[41]. One way we can free Jesus from the page[42] and implement digital culture into the everyday life and evangelical mission of the church is to use the resources available, and become immersed into the digital world by taking up an online residence. We can begin communicating the message of God in the digital language of the culture.

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[38] "Social Networking Fact Sheet," accessed January 8, 2015, http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheets/social-networking-fact-sheet/. According to pewresearch.com, "As of January 2014, 74% of online adults use social networking sites."

[39] Aaron Smith, "6 New Facts about Facebook," accessed January 7, 2015, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/02/03/6-new-facts-about-facebook/.

[40] Leonard Sweet, *Viral: How Social Networking is Poised to Ignite Revival* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBook Press, 2012), 196.

[42] Ibid.

Therefore, when culture communicates in tweets of 140-characters or less, we can communicate in the same manner. This is not to lessen or cheapen the message of the God. But when the audience and community is online, communicating in 140-characters, it is important that we join them and communicate with them.

Culture captures six to fifteen second videos. We need to communicate who we are as the Church, and who God is in the same manner. In the previous statistics from Erik Qualman, the six to fifteen second videos are the new 30-second commercials; therefore perhaps we need to begin making "commercials" of both the life of the church and the scriptures. These "commercials" give the opportunity to communicate the message visually and verbally through digital and social media platforms.

An example of what this might look like can be seen from a project done by a group of High School students in Detroit. Andy Kastl, a social studies teacher at a local Detroit high school came up with the idea to have his students "Vine" various constitutional amendments. Vine is an electronic device application that allows users to create :06 videos and then share them using the social media app on their smartphones. Kastl's students were given an amendment and they had to create a video, demonstrating their knowledge on the amendment, and then post the video on Vine.

April Brown, writer of the article, 'Vining' The Bill of Rights: History Lesson Taps Social Media, quoted Andy Kastl when he said, "They love it."[43] One student, Morgan Duda had the task of summing up the 13th amendment that abolished slavery. Brown quoted Morgan Duda when she stated, "I actually learned the 13th Amendment, and it probably will stick with me throughout my whole life because I would remember and it was fun to do."[44] Brown stated the following in conclusion to the article

> Kastl, too, sees an important outcome from the assignment. 'It's more of an authentic assessment I think,' said Kastl. '. . . instead of, "Can you regurgitate the information that's been given to you over the last two weeks?" Well a lot of kids can just memorize things and regurgitate it without really understanding it. This, I think, forces them to understand it and prove understanding.[45]

In seeking to immerse ourselves in digital culture, maybe we should begin encouraging people to "vine" the scriptures, or whichever digital application they are comfortable with, as a means of interpreting the ancient stories. Perhaps this method could aid in a deeper understanding of the message. The one thing we cannot do is to underestimate the power of video and image, even if it is only a short snippet, especially to a culture that is used to the fast-paced digital world.

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[43] April Brown, "'Vining' the Bill of Rights: History Lesson Taps Social Media," accessed January 7, 2014, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/vining-the-bill-of-rights-history-lesson-taps-social-media/.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

These were just two examples of how we, as the church, can begin immersing ourselves within digital culture. However we choose to communicate, with over 50% of those online being less than 30 years of age,[46] it is necessary and vital for the church to communicate digitally and socially to this generation.

The final element the church can learn from the millennial generation is the need to move from teaching to participation. Sweet stated, "Social media is inherently interactive. You can choose to make church interactive, or you can resign yourself to seeing a generation missing for decades to come."[47] Fully investing evangelistic approaches within the digital age is not a one and done type of thing. It is not enough to simply be online. This would be like a team simply getting dressed to play a game, but not actually taking the field to play. In order to connect and engage with the digital culture, it is necessary to get in the game, play and leave everything on the field.

Millennials desire connectivity, and connectivity cannot happen through sporadic approaches. The virtual world millennials live and thrive in is dynamic, mobile, and in constant motion. In fact, over 23% of social media users check their various accounts a minimum of 5 times a day.[48] This means millennials are constantly engaging and interacting, because they want to belong, they want to matter, they want to stay connected with what is going on, and they want their voice heard.

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[46] Diane Hughes, "Social Media – A Great Video with some Surprising Stats!," *Dianehughesdotcom Blog,* accessed December 6, 2014, http://dianehughesdotcom.wordpress.com/2013/06/26/social-media-a-great-video-with-some-surprising-stats/.

[47] Leonard Sweet, 196.

[48] Mike McGrail, "Infographic – Social Media Statistics for 2013," Velocity Digital, accessed December 6, 2014, http://www.velocitydigital.co.uk/infographic-social-media-statistics-for-2013/.

For the church, in order to make an impact and influence this generation and beyond, interacting and engaging with millennials has to be at the forefront. There has to be a higher level of online, digital engagement. Otherwise, the people, places, companies, and organizations that *are* engaging with millennials will get their attention and keep it, because they have found a way to connect, engage and "evangelize" their message.

For Such a Time is This

Leonard Sweet recounted an experience he had while a student of the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.:

> Martin Luther King Jr. taught only one college course in his life. President Benjamin E. Mays asked him to teach a course in social philosophy at Morehouse College (1961-1962). Eight students signed up for it – six males, two females.
>
> Throughout that semester the students took few notes. Forget any taping of King's lectures and seminars. Those who did take notes didn't save them. There were no photographs taken of Professor King at the lectern. No saved syllabi. No saved papers, marked up and graded by King himself.
>
> These are the only people in the world who can legitimately call themselves "students of Martin Luther King Jr." And yet they missed their moment. None have any evidence of having taken the course, other than the class registration records of Morehouse College, and the fact that their professor gave them a grade.
>
> One of the saddest things you can say about anyone? They stood in the presence of greatness and missed it. Let's not miss our moment.[49]

What if the church did not miss the moment, but instead took hold of the moment and leveraged every ounce of what it means to live in the digital age? This leveraging does not mean leaving behind pre-digital ways; what it means is adding onto the existing methods and fully using the digital technology and social media resources available to reach the digital generation. Furthermore, what if we leveraged our efforts not for the

[49] Leonard Sweet, *Viral: How Social Networking is Poised to Ignite Revival,* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBook Press, 2012), 47-48.

purpose of popularity, trending, or the coolness factor, but for the sole purpose of furthering the message of the God, and reaching a group of individuals who have the potential to change the world?

What if the church approached evangelism, the proclamation of the gospel message, in a digitized manner, rather than with a printed book? What if throughout the week people saw the church making intentional connections through the use of digital and social media to create and build relationships, by providing opportunities to strengthen relationships with one another, and deepen their faith journey? What if the church had an intentional strategy for digital and social media communication both within worship and throughout the week?

Instead of running from the unknown, it is time the church immersed itself within the digital world, learned the language, and communicated effectively and relevantly to the natives (millennials and beyond) of the digital age. Maybe then the world would begin to see a resurgence or even a revival, rising up within the walls of the church, both brick and mortar, and zeroes and ones. "Let us not miss this moment."[50]

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[50] Leonard Sweet, 48.

CHAPTER SIX

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Evangelism in its most basic form is the proclamation of the gospel message. However, as was noted in previous chapters, evangelism is much more than a proclamation. Evangelism is communicating and teaching the message of God, intentionally connecting with those who have heard the message, and then issuing an invitation to an ongoing relationship with Jesus. Therefore, it can be assumed that evangelism done well and correctly should ultimately move individuals from hearing the message to initiation into the kingdom and a relationship with Jesus. However, in order for the evangelism process to be effective it is important that the message, which is communicated, be conveyed in the language with which the culture is most familiar; otherwise the message will fall on deaf ears.

The question— "How can the church communicate the message of God within digital culture?"— highlights one of the difficulties the church of the twenty-first-century faces. The problem: millennials are more disconnected from the church now than ever before. Millennials are disconnected in part because we, as the church, have been slow to evolve with the culture in relation to the use of technology and digital forms of communication. The slow-moving evolution has, therefore, created a void with a generation of individuals crying out for meaning and purpose. In digital terms, the church needs a manual update.

Project

The goal of this project was to conduct an ethnographic study of the various methods of digital and social media and their use within the church. The purpose of this research was to create a Digital and Social Media Communication Resource that could not only benefit Fairborn UMC, but others as well. The majority of the research in this ethnographic study dealt with an eight-week study on the use of social media during worship. This study looked at how individuals connected and participated before, during, and after the worship service via their social media sites. The data from this study documented the participants' posts, tweets, hashtag references, tags, likes, favorites, retweets, mentions, shares, and comments. Also documented were two surveys completed on the website, www.surveymonkey.com.[1] The methods used to collect the data[2] came from both Facebook and Twitter analytics, provided by the social media websites, as well as the analytics provided by surveymonkey.com. Once the data was collected it was sorted into various categories and themes.[3]

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[1] See Appendix C and Appendix D for full documented results of the open-ended pre-test survey and post-test survey questions.

[2] The data included: posts, tweets, hashtag references, tags, likes, favorites, retweets, mentions, shares, and comments.

[3] Categories included: social media networks used, social media activity level, age and gender, type of experience participants had (positive, negative, neutral), church attended, service time at Fairborn UMC attended, impact study had on friends/followers of participants, ways in which friends/followers responded, overall value of the study.

Upon the completion of the ethnographic study, the research moved to a case study method, using Fairborn UMC as a test site for the implementation of a digital and social media communications strategy. This strategy was geared primarily towards Fairborn UMC; however, its method is adaptable and replicable for use by other individuals, churches, or organizations.

This strategy was designed for use on a yearly basis and created a system or strategy for intentional digital and social media communication within the areas of worship, bible study, and overall marketing. The digital and social media communications strategy[4] included the following elements:

- A guide for creating a social media strategy
    - Approaches that have and have not worked
- Suggested areas of digital and social media communication
    - Social Media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube
    - Digital Media: Video, Graphics, Live Streaming, Websites
- Suggested approaches to biblical storytelling in the digital age
    - In worship and Bible study[5]

[4] Along with written information, additional resources will also become available on the website, www.socialfolk.org. This site is a continual state of construction, as new items are added weekly.

[5] Additional Bible study resources online at www.socialfolk.org

Ethnographic Study

An eight-week study was conducted to test whether or not incorporating a digital and social media element into worship was an effective way to communicate, reach and deepen the spiritual experiences of individuals, primarily those in the millennial generation. When doing any form of research it is important to define the methods used. These methods are often used as a guide, directing the researcher in the necessary pathways to discover various conclusions. During this research, a mixed methods approach was used. Mixed methods research, according to Creswell, ". . . is an approach to inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating those two forms of data, and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks."[6]

The research focused on two areas during the data collection process. Those areas were an ethnographic study and a case study. An ethnographic study is one "in which the researcher studies the shared patterns of behavior, language, and actions of an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged period of time." According to Creswell, a case study is " . . . a design of inquiry found in many fields, especially evaluation, in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals."[7]

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[6] John Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches, 4th Edition* (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2014), 4.

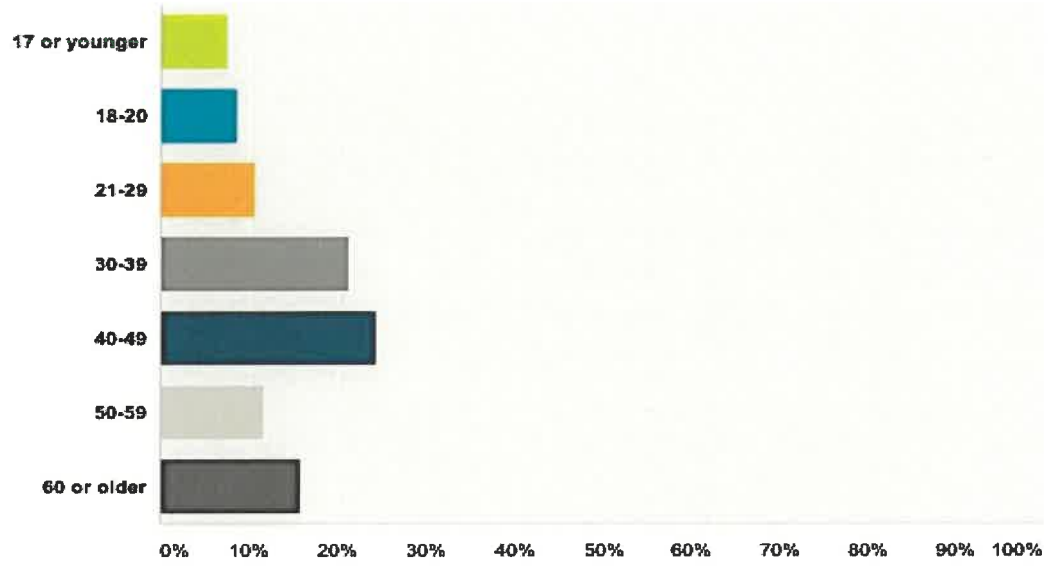
[7] Ibid., 14.

Each study and method was done for the purpose of gathering data in order to create a digital and social media communication resource. Located in the following pages is the data that was collected from the pre and post study survey. Due to the digital native focus of this project the graphed data is included in its entirety.

The majority of research in the ethnographic study dealt with two approaches. The first was the use of social media during worship. A pre-study survey was given two weeks prior to the beginning of the study. The survey collected a baseline of knowledge, experience and overall usage of social media with those who participated in the study.

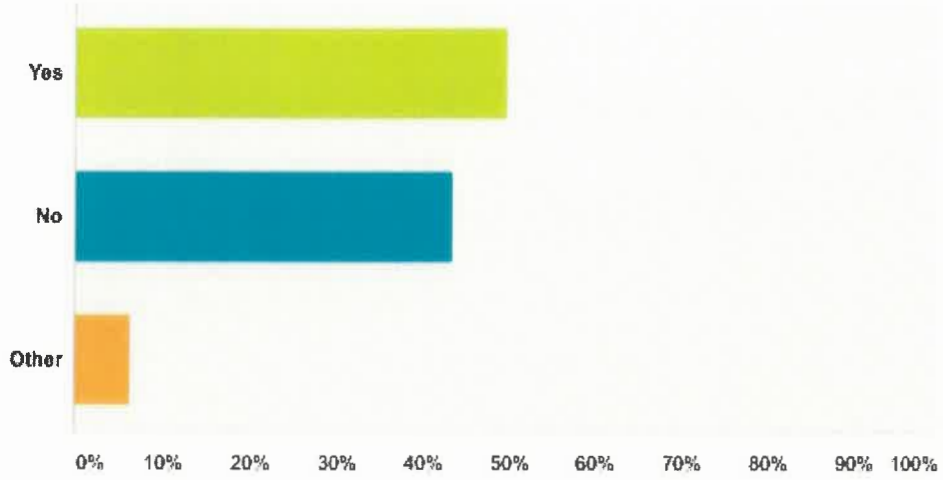
A total of ninty-four individuals took the pre-study survey, of which 47.88% of them fell within the millennial age range, 18-33 while 52.12% fell outside that age range. (See Figure 2).

Figure 2



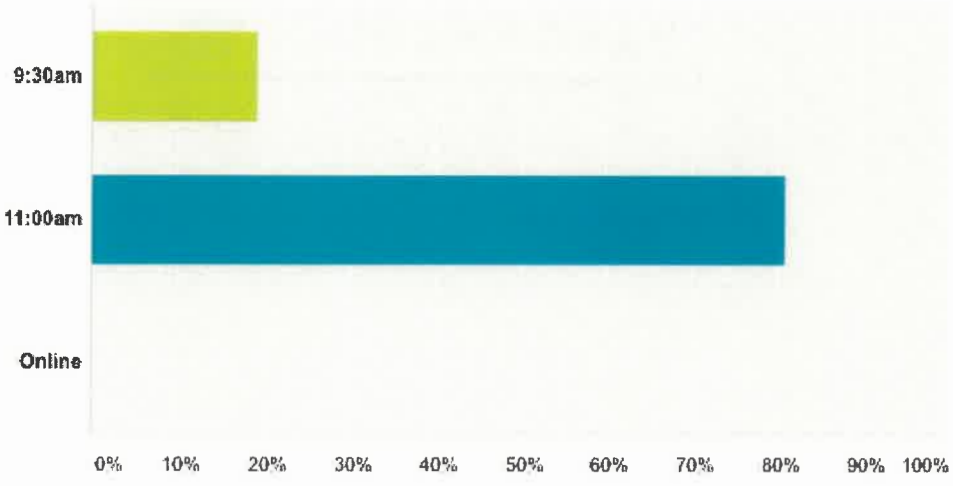
Participants were asked if they attended Fairborn UMC or somewhere else. Of the participants 50% were connected with Fairborn UMC and 50% were connected with another church, or no church at all. (See Figure 3)

Figure 3



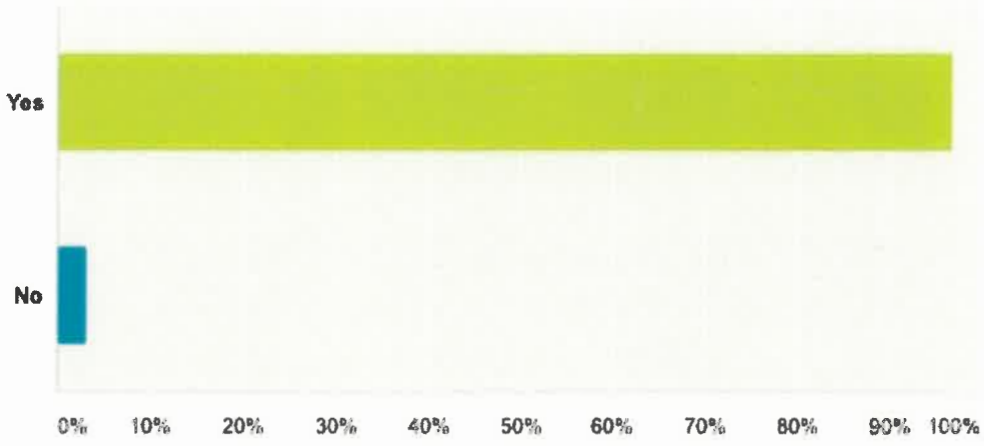
Of those 50% (forty-seven people) who attend Fairborn UMC, 80.85% of them attend the 11 am contemporary worship service, with 19.15% attending the 9:30 am traditional worship service. (See Figure 4)

Figure 4



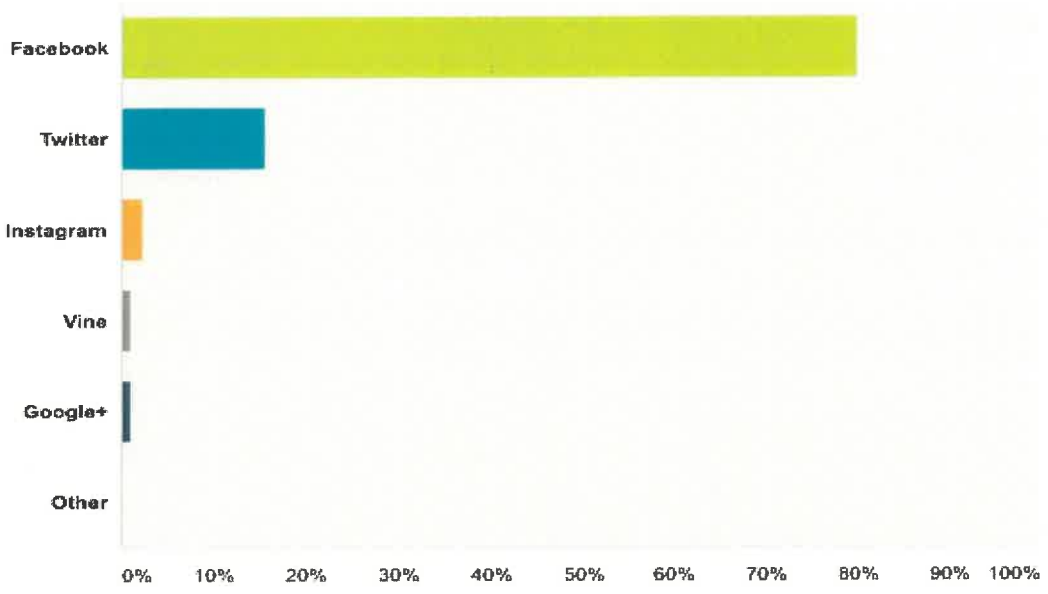
Of the ninty-four individuals surveyed, 96.77% of them have a social media account, opposed to only 3.2% that do not. This is an interesting statistic because half of those surveyed fall outside the millennial age range, thus making them a digital immigrant, yet 96.77% of them have a social media account. Therefore, they are online, and at least participate in some manner, with social media. We can surmise then that they see digital technology and social media as something of usefulness in their life. (See Figure 5)

Figure 5



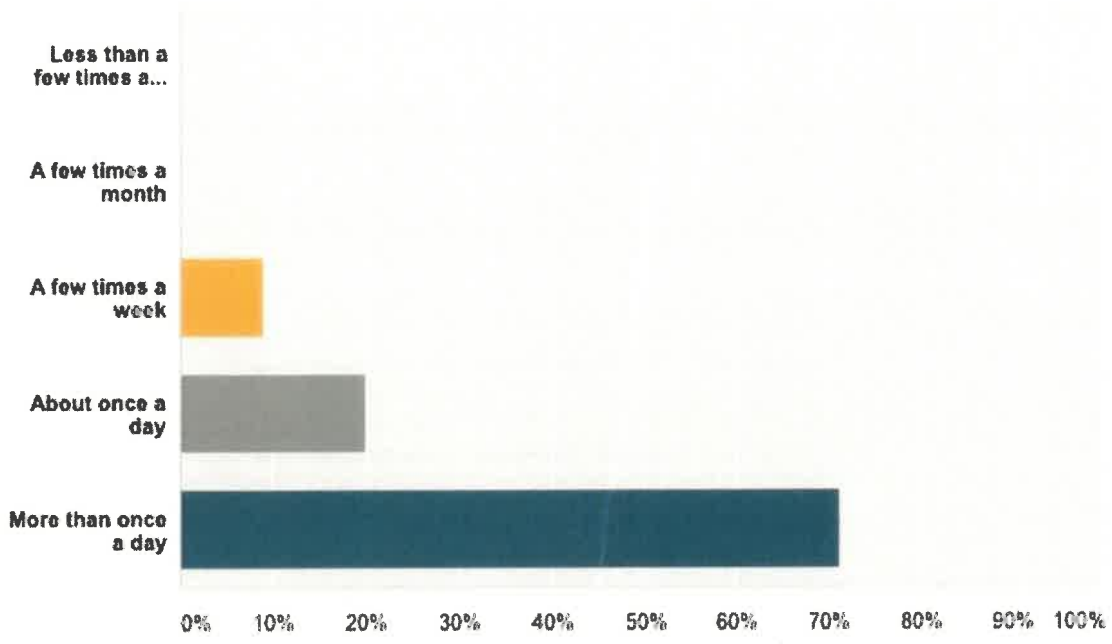
Of the 80% of those surveyed who have a social media account reported that Facebook was the primary social media network used and coming in second was Twitter (15.56%). (See Figure 6)

Figure 6



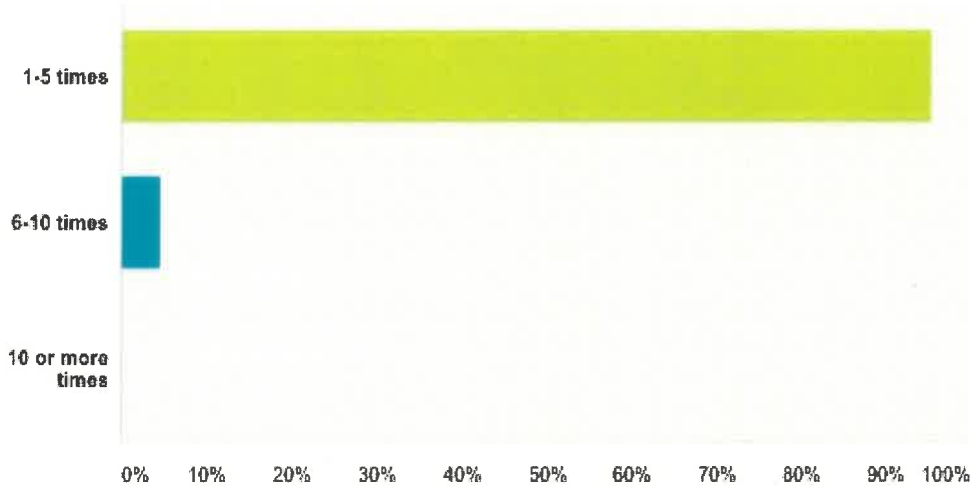
The second interesting statistic was that those connected with a social media network log on at least once a week (29%), with the majority of individuals logging in multiple times a day (71.11%). Figure 7 below shows that people, of all ages, are connecting to their social networks not just casually, but often. No one surveyed, who has a social media account, reported that they never log on; all, at some point in the week, log on to connect with someone.

Figure 7



The remaining questions asked in the pre-study survey looked at the usage of social media within worship. The ninety individuals responded to the question, "Do you use social media during worship?" Of those ninety, 75.56% reported that they did not use social media during worship, with 24.44% reporting they do use social media in worship. Of those 24.44% who use social media in worship, 95.45% say they post or tweet something between one and five times, and 4.55% of them post or tweet something more than six times. (See Figure 8)

Figure 8



It is important to recognize the concerns of the 75.56% who stated they did not use social media in worship. These individuals represent a group that is not necessarily against social media; they just choose not to use it as a means of worship. Those 75.56% who reported they did not use social media in worship provided reasoning behind their "no" response. The two overwhelming reasons for not using social media during worship were: [1] it is a distraction (27%), and [2] it is disrespectful to the pastors/leaders (19%). Other reasons for not using social media during worship were: not appropriate (10%), no phone or limited access (10%), never thought about doing so (8%), and the remaining responses fell into the "other" category (16%).

It has been interesting to note that when this survey was administered over a year ago quite a few of these respondents were not using social media in worship. Since that time, as the digital and social media culture within Fairborn UMC evolved, so have their digital and social media tendencies. Most of the 75.56% still do not use social media in worship. However, a few of them will now post something before worship stating they

are at church, or they will post something after worship about something significant that happened. This is a small minority of individuals, but the more the use of social media has become part of the church's culture, the more comfortable those in the 75.56% felt in posting their thoughts.

Finally, of the ninety individuals surveyed, 39% committed to participate in a eight-week study using social media in worship, and of those 39% who committed, 37% (fourteen individuals) actually participated during the entire eight-week period.

The eight-week study looked at how individuals connected and participated before, during, and after a worship service via their social media sites. The use of both observation and analytics helped document the participants' activity on their social media sites. Previous assumptions had been made prior to the study by those surveyed, and a piece of this research was to test those assumptions as objective or personal opinion.

In addition the researcher asked the following questions: Does the use of social media within a worship setting deepen one's involvement, engagement and understanding of the scriptures, music, message? Is there a connection between the amount of social media activity and one's faith journey? Are there benefits to tweeting and posting during a worship service/event? Does the use of social media provide relational connections within worship? Is the use of social media during worship distracting or disrespectful? A post-study survey was given to collect final data regarding the effectiveness of the study and the use of social media within worship.

During the eight-week study participants were asked, by the researcher as well as through a live invitation on Sunday morning from the worship leader, to post and tweet as often as they liked during the worship service. As a way of identifying the conversation

thread on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, the hashtag #EmptyTomb14 was used. Those individuals primarily posting on Twitter and Instagram were also asked to tag their posts and tweets with @FairbornUMC, in addition to the hashtag.

No restrictions were placed on those participating, other than being asked to post or tweet during the worship service. Therefore, individuals were free to post and tweet anything from text, image and video based content. The invitation to continue the online conversation post-worship was also given, but not required. Along with participants, the researcher, representing Fairborn UMC, also live-tweeted throughout the service to help with getting the conversation thread going.

Between the two most used social media networks, Facebook and Twitter, there were 249 total posts and tweets making an average of 31.12 posts/tweets per week. Individuals posted and tweeted to a total of 9,574[8] friends and followers over the eight-week period. This means that on any given Sunday an average of 1,196 individuals had the potential to see something online that was going on at Fairborn UMC. Those friends and followers liked or favorited a post or tweet a total of 914 times, commented a total of sixty-seven times, and shared or retweeted a post/tweet 109 times.

[8] It needs to be noted that these numbers may vary due to the overall number of mutual friends and followers between participants.

It can also be noted that, as individuals became more engaged on their own social media accounts during worship, they also became more engaged than during the previous eight weeks with what the church was posting and tweeting both on Sunday mornings and throughout the week. Fairborn UMC's overall impressions, reach, and engagement levels on both Facebook and Twitter increased during this time.[9] Both accounts saw an increase in new likes and followers as well.

These statistics help answer the question: "Does the use of social media provide relational connections within worship?" Yes. The use of social media in worship does provide relational connections, both inside and outside the church doors. Those posting and tweeting in worship had conversations, both during and after worship from something that they had posted or tweeted. These statistics also show that individuals not in worship had the opportunity to engage with what was going on at Fairborn UMC, as well as the opportunity to engage and interact with someone else in the area of their faith and spirituality. On average Fairborn UMC has around 250 individuals in worship on weekly basis. When the individuals on the inside of the building begin posting and tweeting to those online, the sphere of influence immediately expands well past the 250 individuals physically inside the church doors.

The statistics show that people connected and engaged with others during this eight-week study. But did that connection and engagement alter anything on the inside? Was there a transformation for those who participated in the study? The answer to those questions lead to the post-study survey to which the participants responded.

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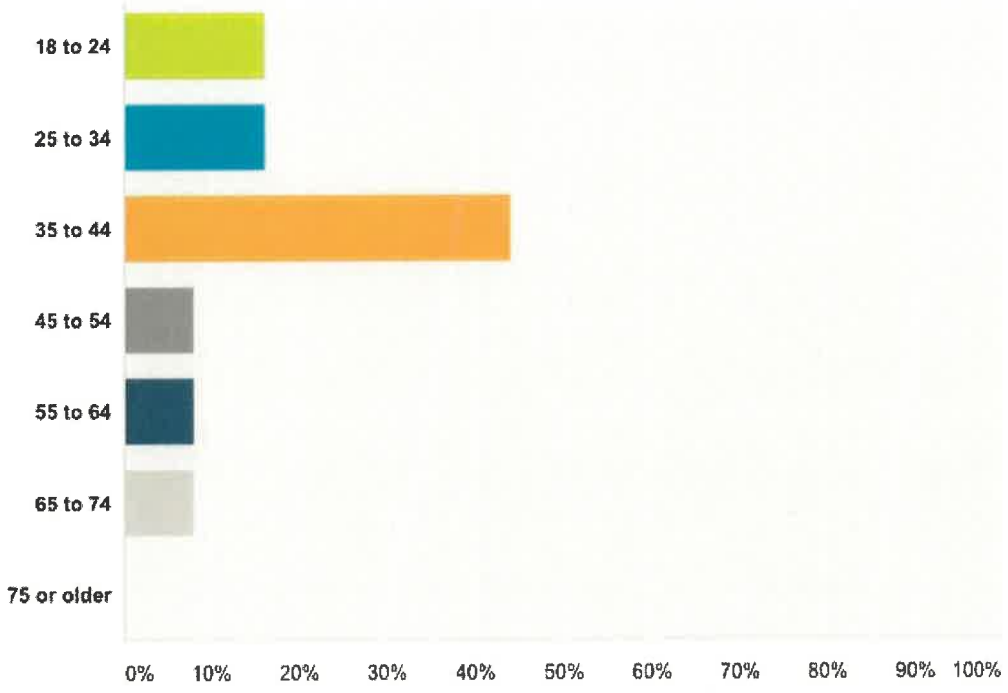
[9] See Figures 21-28 showing the before and during study statistics. It can be noted that there is a significant increase in the overall impressions, engagement, reach, likes, and shares.

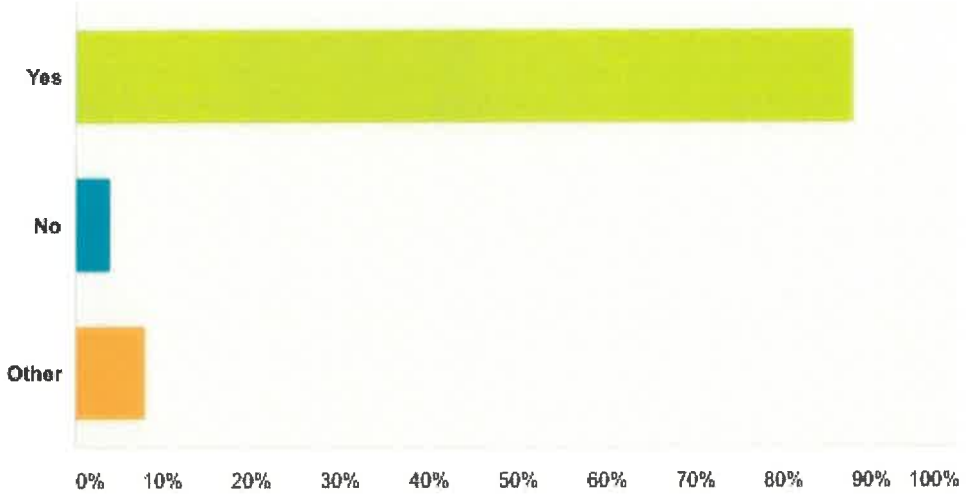
Those who participated in the eight-week study responded to a series of survey questions seeking information on the impact and effectiveness of using social media in worship. The post-study survey was administered only online, and twenty-five individuals participated in the first series of questions. Of those twenty-five individuals, 32% were within the millennial age range, with the other 68% being outside that range. (See Figure 9)

Figure 9



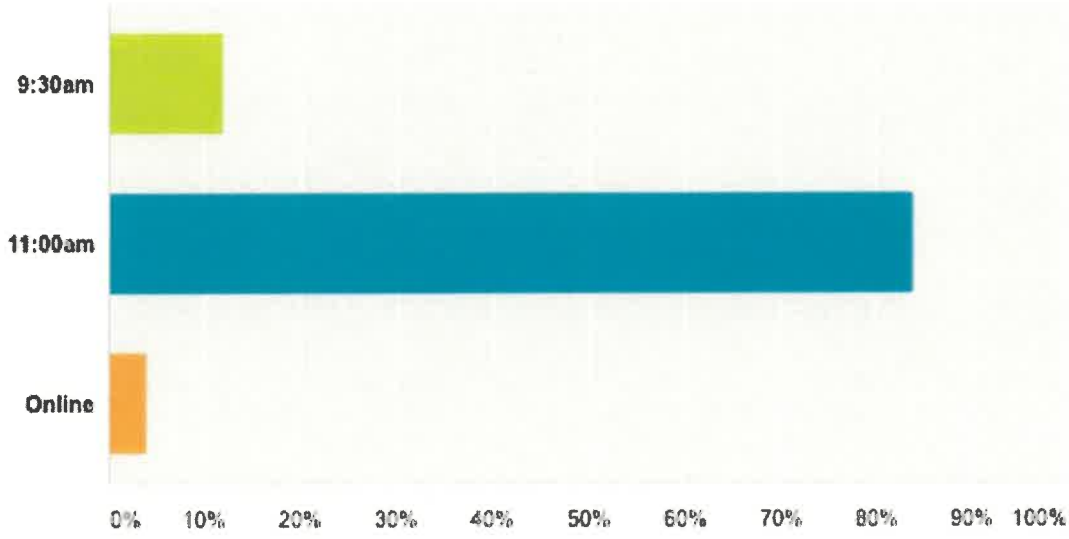
Of those surveyed, 88% attend Fairborn UMC, with the other 12% attending elsewhere. (See Figure 10)

Figure 10



The service most likely attended by those responding was the 11 am contemporary service with 88% responses. Second was the 9:30 am worship with 11% stating they would be more likely to attend that service. Lastly, less than 1% of the responses were for the live streamed worship service at 11 am. (See Figure 11)

Figure 11

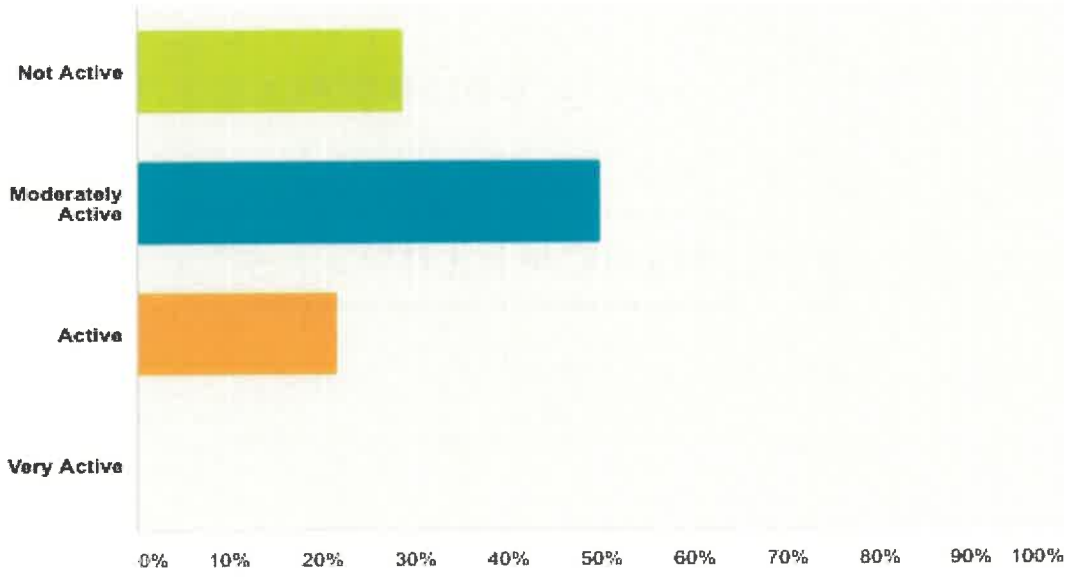


Those who responded 56% (fourteen individuals) to the post-study survey actually participated in the eight-week study. The other 44% did not participate in the eight-week study, and their survey ended at this point, with no further comments.

When asked why they chose to participate in the eight-week study the overwhelming response was because the study sounded interesting and fun (42%). The second highest response was to help out the researcher (35%). The remaining responses fell into the "other" category (23%). One interesting response from the "other" category stated, "FUMC is the first and only church I have ever attended that encourages social media during worship. I think it is a great way to stay in touch with your church and stay relevant. So I def [sic] wanted to participate."[10]

Before the study, the participants responded that they were active to moderately active on social media during worship (71.43%), with the remaining responding that they were not very active (28.57%). (See Figure 12)

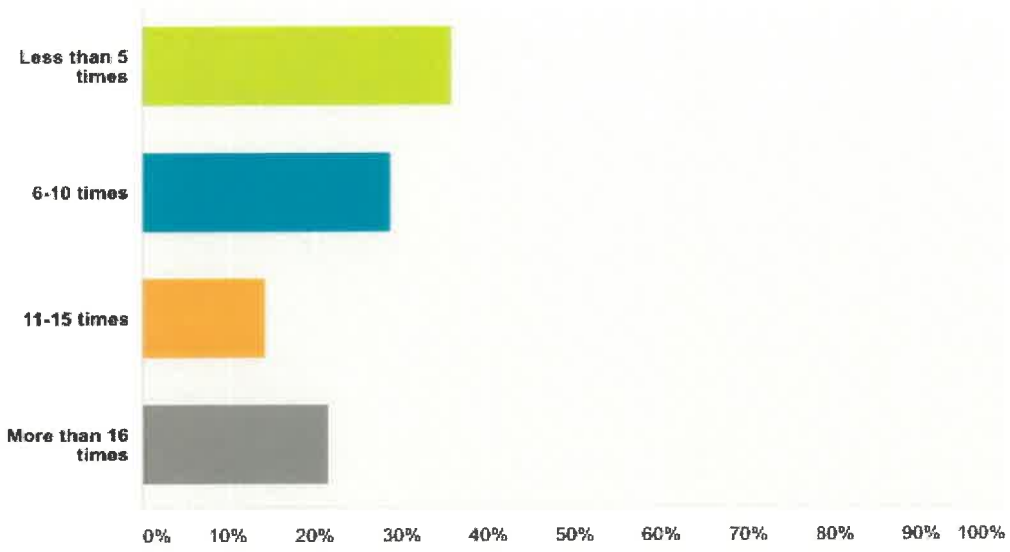
Figure 12



[10] See Appendix D, Question 6, Response 8.

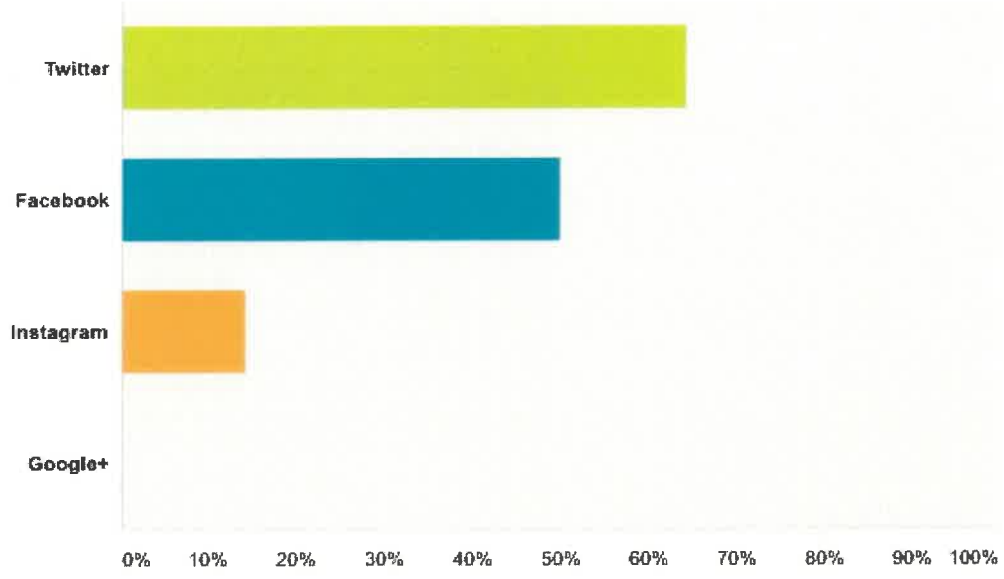
During the eight-week study 64% of the participants tweeted or posted something to their social media accounts on average at least 6 times or more, while the remaining 36% tweet or posted five times or less. (See Figure 13)

Figure 13



Twitter was the dominant social media used during the eight-week study with 64.29% of the participants using that social network. Facebook came in second at 50%, with Instagram being used by 14.29% of participants. Google+ was not used at all by any of those who participated in the study. (See Figure 14)

Figure 14



Of the individuals surveyed 78.57% had friends or followers interact with a post or tweet they made during worship. (See Figure 16) These interactions came mostly in the form of "likes" and "favorites." Shares and retweets came second, with comments and mentions on posts or tweets a close third. (See figure 15) Of those responding, 21.43% had no interaction from their friends or followers during the eight-week study.

Figure 15

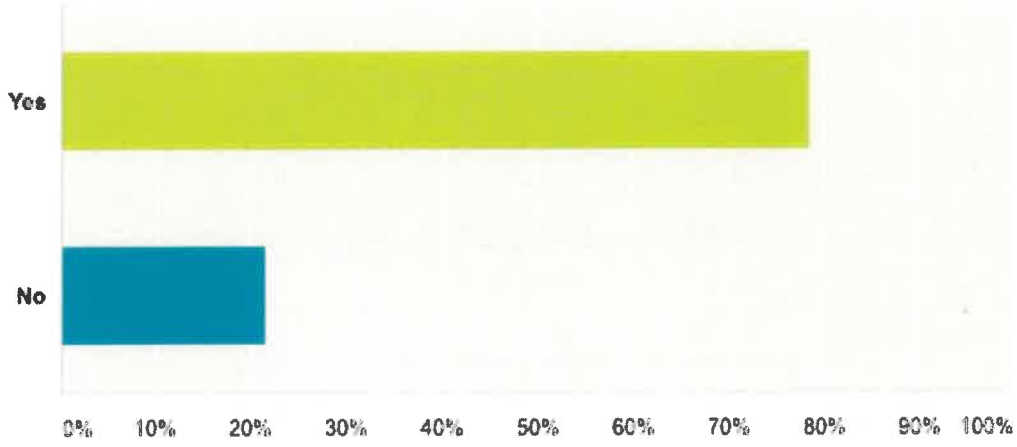
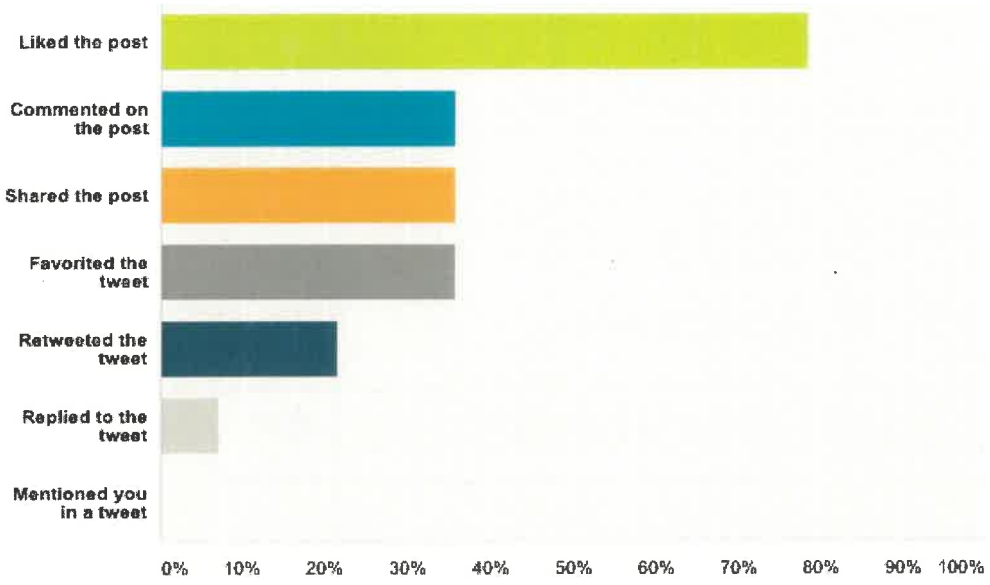
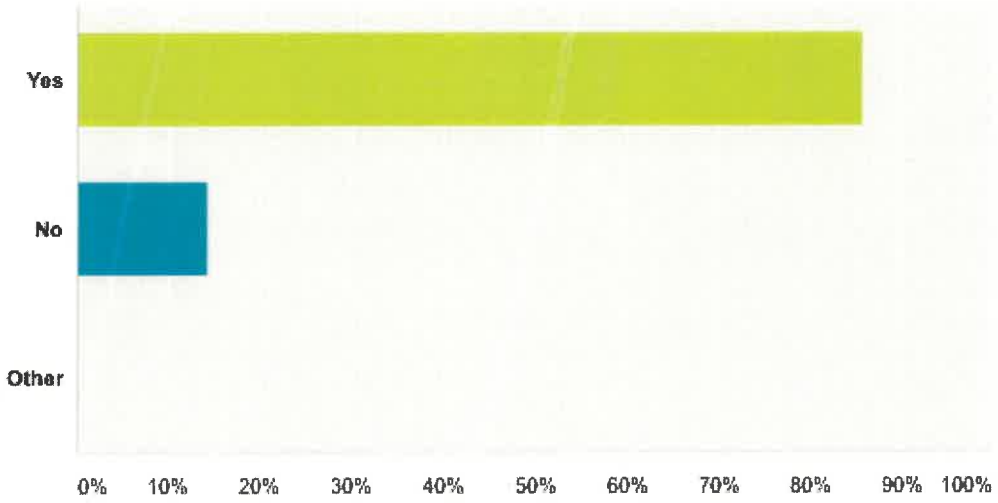


Figure 16



Since the eight-week study, 85.71% of the participants have continued to use social media in worship, while 14.29% have not. (See Figure 17)

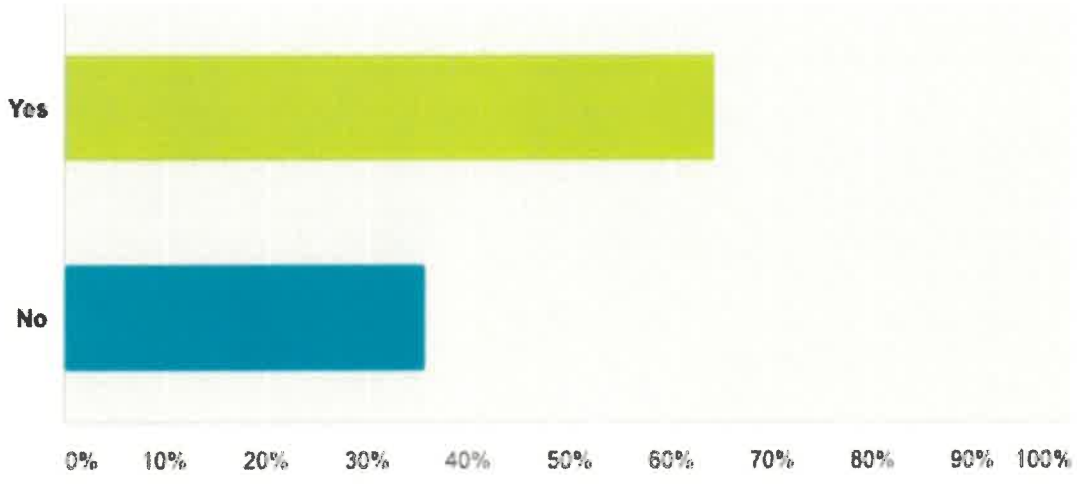
Figure 17



Participants were asked a series of open-ended survey questions regarding the impact and effectiveness of the study. Of those participants, 64.29% responded that the use of social media in worship deepened the way in which they experienced God, and 35.71% said social media did not deepen an experience. (See Figure 18)

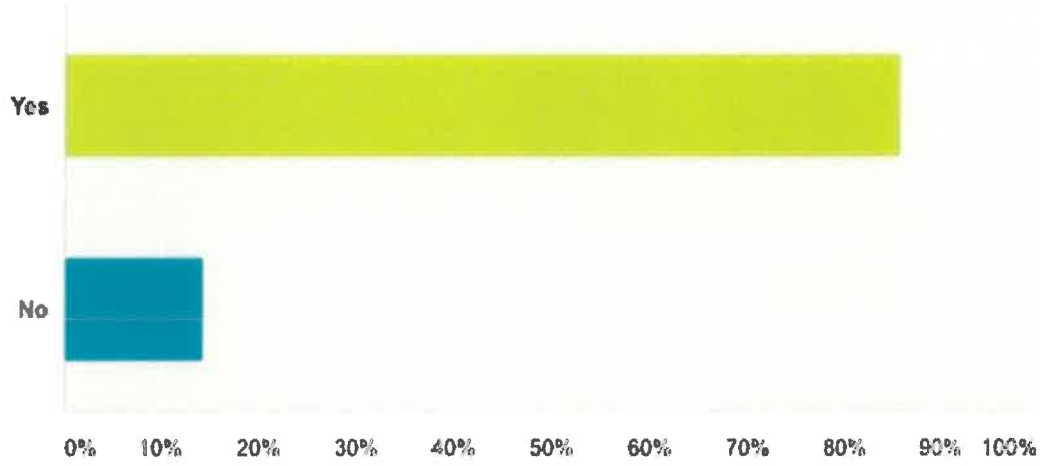
The participants were then asked to explain their answer, and 57% offered an explanation. For those who responded "yes, social media did deepen their experience with God," they explained that when they typed out their posts or tweets this allowed them to focus and reflect more on what was being said, and it helped to drive the points home even more. Also, they noted that posting and tweeting was similar to taking notes, only in digital form, and when those notes were posted online it allowed them to go back and read days later what was said. Furthermore, posting comments and notes online allowed the opportunity to see what others were able to discover from the message.

Figure 18



Finally, participants were asked if the eight-week study was beneficial to them and their experience of worship, and 85.71% responded "yes," and 14.29% responded "no." (See Figure 19)

Figure 19



The goal of the post-study survey was to help answer the following questions which were raised earlier: first, does the use of social media within a worship setting deepen one's involvement, engagement and understanding of the scriptures, music, message? From the responses of those surveyed and who participated in the study, the answer would be yes. Also noted, the use of social media in worship offered a deeper involvement and deeper engagement not only with God, but also within the community, both in worship and outside of worship.

The participants indicated the use of social media helped them "think of the points on a deeper level than just sitting and listening."[11] Thus, the participants were actively engaged with what was going on in worship. Those surveyed also noted that one of the

[11] See Appendix D, Question 16, Response 8.

most beneficial elements of the study was the opportunity to share with others.[12] According to one participant, the study " . . . provided an intentional forum to spread the word of God rather thank [sic] just 'keeping' the message for me alone."[13]

Second, is there a connection between the amount of social media activity and one's faith journey? This question was harder to gauge, based on the surveyed responses. However, through observation during the eight-week study, it was noted there was a minimal increase in social media activity. The increase came in the type of posts and tweets made. Those who participated during the eight weeks seemed more likely to post a positive or uplifting post or tweet throughout the week, a post or tweet having to do with their faith or church, or a reference to a significant part of the service or message, than those posts and tweets made in the previous weeks leading up to the study. This change could show a heightened sense of awareness. Others were seeing what was posted on Sunday mornings; therefore, more care may have been taken in weekly posts.

Another possible explanation of the increase in positive, faith-driven posts could have been the added elements in their worship experience that helped connect the points and deepen the overall message, resulting in the desire for the message to be shared with others. Third, the increase in social media activity could be the digital transformation of an inward change occurring. The data is unclear as to what exactly caused the change in the type of posts and tweets that were made, but, according to the observations, a digital transformation did happen slowly.

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[12] See Appendix D, Question 16, Response 3.

[13] See Appendix D, Question 16, Response 4.

The final question asked was, "Is the use of social media during worship distracting or disrespectful?" The data in the pre-study survey suggested that those who have never used social media during worship thought doing so would be a distraction to their worship, as well as disrespectful to the individual speaking. According to those surveyed 14% felt distracted or as if they missed portions of the service while using social media in worship. The remaining 86% had a positive experience using social media in worship, and found it deepened their experience, and heightened and augmented their worship. No one surveyed reported feeling as if they were disrespecting those leading worship or speaking. In fact, one individual stated the following:

> In my opinion, we live in a world where less and fewer people are attending church. The only way for the church to stay relevant is to embrace new technology [sic] does not discourage it. Too much tradition will only lead to an empty church in my opinion.[14]

Ethnographic Study Conclusions

The research findings proved that individuals participating in the study had a positive digital and social media experience in worship. Thus the findings led to a few insights and hypotheses. First: if the church was more intentional about inviting individuals into an atmosphere where they were permitted to use their digital devices, rather than being told to turn them off, or silence them, people may have a deepened worshipful experience. Second, the deepened experiences may potentially lead to a lifestyle transformation in how one communicates on their social media accounts. Third,

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[14] See Appendix D, Question 18, Response 8.

this deepened experience is not for an individual in worship alone; the research showed that those connected (friends and followers) with those in worship were also positively affected. The study allowed for a range of influence to go beyond the church pews, and onto the news feeds of people across the world. By the simple invitation to turn on and open a digital device, instead of the command to silence or turn it off, the church speaks words of value and acceptance to a culture that lives and breathes the digital. Lastly, when the church engages with individuals throughout the week online, there is created a greater sense of community, connectedness, involvement, and pride in the organization.

The outcomes of the study were pleasantly surprising and provided for the researcher a confirmation of where communication within the church, and more specifically to the millennial generation, needs to go. Millennials are online. In fact, most are online from the moment they wake up until the moment they fall asleep, and when given permission and invited to be online during worship, they have the opportunity to leverage their influence for the kingdom.

However, we would be remiss to ignore the perspective of the digital immigrants who may see digital and social media as a disturbance to their more traditional face-to-face interactions. These voices were not left out of the study. In fact, many digital immigrants took the pre-study survey and offered to help because they recognize that in order for the church to grow, new approaches need to be explored. Did they all participate within the study after taking the initial survey? No. However, due to the open-mindedness of the both the researcher and the digital immigrants, there were conversations throughout the study, and a mutual respect and understanding from both parties was reached.

The researcher listened to the digital immigrant's viewpoint of appreciating the face-to-face conversations, and accepted and validated those interactions. It needs to be noted, that it was never the intention of this study to do away with face-to-face interactions. On the contrary, it was the intention of the study to increase those interactions by creating digital crossovers. When the researcher explained that social media was not to replace the face-to-face interactions, rather it was to act as a supplemental means of communication and interactions with the younger generations, the digital immigrants were in acceptance of the overall purpose and subsequent study. As digital and social media communications evolve, keeping open lines of dialogue between digital natives and digital immigrants will be important for the continued success of the church.

During the eight-week study, it became evident that individuals enjoyed the digital and social media aspect of worship. It was a blessing to see the conversation thread on Sunday mornings. There were moments when questions were asked online within worship, and before the service concluded we took a few of those questions and answered, either as a question and answer section of the worship, or through online communication. Seeing, in real time, the thoughts and insights from individuals was refreshing and insightful. Individuals connected with Fairborn UMC who had never connected with the church before. Not only was Jesus happening in the worship space, but also Jesus was happening digitally and trending in Fairborn on Sunday mornings.

When looking at the entire project as a whole, the church can increase our impact on the kingdom, and can reach and evangelize to an entirely different group of people if we were to take the opportunity to communicate digitally and through social

media. Jesus said, "Go into the entire world," and if Jesus were standing before us now, he would more than likely say, Go into the whole world, the physical world and the digital world. Get on the digital news feeds of the people; preach the Gospel wherever and however you can. Where the people are, so needs to be the church, and the people are online, and so needs to be Fairborn UMC.

Due to the findings of the study, an invitation to individuals on Sunday mornings to open up their digital devices and join us in the conversation by posting and tweeting became an intentional part of worship. Over time, there was an increase in the number of individuals engaging with the church online, both during worship and throughout the week. This fact caused the online focus at Fairborn UMC to become a vital ministry and a part of the daily life of the church. As online engagement and interactions increased, along with the continual shift in how culture utilizes and communicates digitally, it quickly became evident that an intentional social media communications strategy was needed. This recognition led to the second focus of this research.

Case-Study: A Social Media Communication Strategy for Fairborn UMC

Regardless of the method of communication, in order to effectively communicate, it is important that there exist an intentional and carefully thought-out strategy. Gone are the days of posting once or twice a week. Culture has seen a shift in the type of communication that individuals engage with, which has caused marketers, especially social media marketers to look at four main type of communication: conversation, content, community, and connections. The shift in what individuals engage

and connect with was noted in the eight-week study; those who participated engaged in a conversational manner and the more highly creative the content, the most involved individuals were.

The shift led the researcher and the digital and social media communications team at Fairborn UMC to design a social media communications strategy.[15] In fact, it resulted in quite a few strategies, as the first few did not work. Those strategies were very complicated and often too detailed to manage, which led to information being forgotten, posted too quickly or at the wrong times, and to the wrong audiences. In the beginning, there was not a good, simple and easily followed plan on what or when information needed to be posted.

Instead of continually playing Russian roulette with the communication and content being posted, a few changes were made. We recognized that if people were online, the church needed to be there as well. However, simply being online was not enough. If the church was going to be online, we needed to be very intentional about what was being communicated. Therefore, because it is not beneficial to post information that never gets seen or engaged with, we decided to leverage every opportunity we could to get the most reach out of every post and tweet possible. In order to do this, we began observing the tendencies of people online (primarily those connected to the church via Facebook and Twitter). We noted the trends on their accounts and the interactions they had with content we posted. Through the observations, a few patterns emerged. Those patterns included the days and times people were online, what content was liked and engaged with, and what was being responded to and shared.

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[15] See Illustration on page 168 for a sample of one of the initial strategies.

These observations led us to ask and answer the questions of why, who, what, when, and where. As Simon Sinek suggested, in his book, *Start With Why*, we started with, "why." Social media allows others to see the "why" of any business, organization, and in our case, church. The church is more than our non-profit status, building, and place where people go on Sunday mornings. We have a story. We have a purpose; there is a reason we do the things we do. This is the "why" of who we are. Social media can help get the story and message out from behind the walls of the sanctuary and onto the digital news feeds of the people, which is exactly the reason we started with "why." Before every post or tweet we ask these "why" questions: Why is this being posted or shared? Why do people need to know about this event, or that program? Does this post or tweet challenge someone to think deeper about life? Does this content challenge previous assumptions or norms? Is the information helpful, beneficial, and does it add value to someone's life? Then on those extra challenging days, we would ask the most important "why" question: Why are we doing this thing called social media? In short, because Jesus said, "Go." That is "why."

The next question needing to be answered was: Who was the post and content being created for? Was the content a general post, or was it targeted to a specific audience: men, women, teens, parents, students, moms, dads, senior citizens, etc.? Who was it that we wanted the content to reach?

Understanding the culture of each social network is important in finding a target audience as well. Most of the Baby Boomers, GenXers, and older millennials in our fan and follower base are primarily on Facebook, whereas the younger millennials are mainly on Twitter or other social networks altogether such as Instagram, Snapchat, Tumblr, etc.

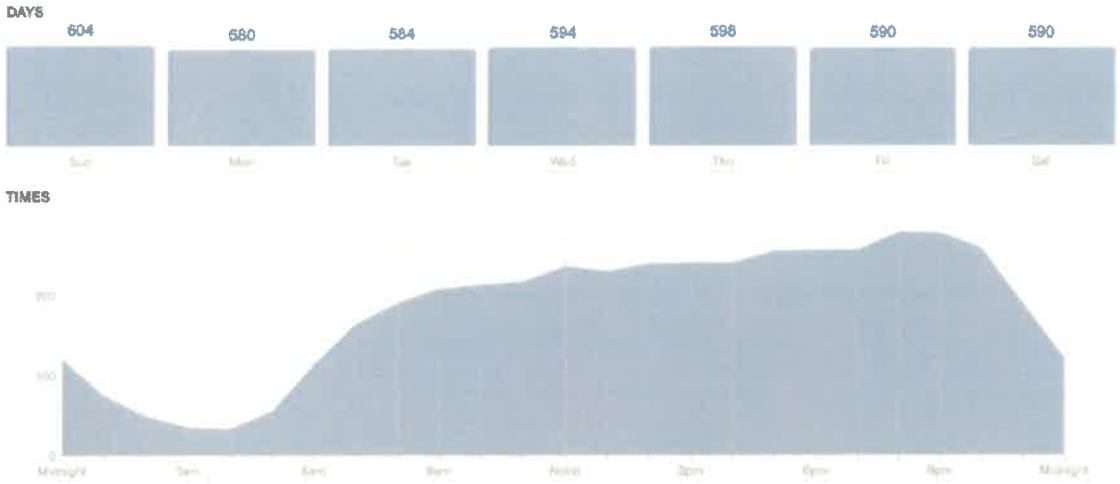
Therefore, it is important to not only know which audience is the desired target audience, but also which social network(s) the audience is engaging and interacting with. When thinking about who the content was being created for we carefully thought about the audience we were targeting, and which social networks that audience was engaged with. We then intentionally focused on the target audience for each post and tweet.

Once we knew the why, and to whom the post was targeted, we had to decide what type of content the post would contain. Was this post an event, general information, image, video, blog, infographic, article, link, promo, or a combination? Deciding the overall goal of the post also helped drive what type of content the post would contain. Maybe the post was a quick reminder of the new sermon series beginning that week. The post may include an image of the series graphic with a short message of, "New Series Coming Sunday! See You There. #NewSeries14." If we wanted people to register for an event, the post might contain a few elements. There would be a link, event information and maybe a video or picture providing a visual idea of what was happening. Figuring out the "what" helps provide guidance and allows the ability to answer the next question, "when." See the illustrations found on pages 163-170 for more information on the different types of tweets and posts we made during the eight-week study.

When is the best or optimal time for the content to be posted: in the morning, afternoon, on the weekends? Maybe the optimal time is late at night, on Wednesday? Knowing when to post content is very helpful because the goal of posting is so others will see the information. Posting at the wrong time does not do any good, nor get the information seen.

When we observed the trends and tendencies of people, we looked at those times when there were online and engaged the most. In looking at figure 20 we were able to see that on Facebook, the overall best day to post information with the highest level of engagement is on Sunday. The overall best time to post information is between 7 pm -10 pm. This does not mean we do not post during the other hours of the day, or on other days of the week, but this information helps us know when the highest levels of engagement will occur, or have the potential to occur.

Figure 20



Another piece of helpful information is understanding the average lifespan of a Facebook post is anywhere from two to three hours, and that the lifespan of a tweet is around eighteen minutes. Therefore, we are mindful and intentional when it comes to posting information, and how often. We know that posting information Monday morning at 3 am will probably not produce as high a rate of engagement as would Wednesday evening at 7 pm.

During a typical week we will post at least once a day, maybe even twice a day (once in the morning and once in the later afternoon) on Facebook depending on what is going in the life of the church. Some marketers have in the past stressed four to five posts per week at the most on Facebook, but times are changing. According to Kevan Lee, Content Curator from buffer.com, the optimal ratio to post on Facebook is between five and ten times a week.[16] We would agree with Mr. Lee as we have observed the greatest return and levels of engagement when posting at least five to ten times per week, with half of those posts being sent after 3 pm.

Twitter does offer a little more flexibility when it comes to tweeting information. The challenge with Twitter is it is a fast-paced social network and tweets have a significantly shorter lifespan than Facebook (eighteen - twenty minutes total[17]). However, that is not a reason to abandon Twitter. What those numbers do mean is that we need to align tweets to post at optimal and high times of the day, those times when individuals will be most likely to engage. We try to space out our tweets throughout the day, one every two or three hours, with an overall goal of tweeting between four to six times per day.

The final question we looked at when posting content is: to where is the content going? Is the content being posted on a social network, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, or is the content more detailed information better served on the website? If the content is better served on the website, the good news is it can be linked via a post on one of the social media channels, directing individuals to seek more information.

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[16] Kevan Lee, "The Social Media Frequency Guide: How often to Post to Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and More," *Buffer Social Blog,* accessed January 8, 2015, https://blog.bufferapp.com/social-media-frequency-guide.

[17] Ibid.

Understanding where the content will be posted is necessary. Contrary to popular belief, social networks are not created equal, and they each have their unique language, function, and ways in which they live and breathe. Therefore, posting on one cannot be as simple as copying and pasting, or hitting the "link" function connecting the other social networks. It is important to learn how each one works independently and then post accordingly.

When we intentionally looked at those questions along with the content we were posting, the social media communications strategy began to take shape. We started to plan a thirty-day content calendar[18] that had information set to post automatically. The first benefit of the content calendar was that there was not a struggle to figure out what to post each day. The content has been well thought-out after having gone through the process of answering why, who, what, when, and where. Then the content has been planned with enough flexibility that if something were to change, or need to be added, there are plenty of opportunities to get the information published and promoted in the appropriate time frame.

A secondary benefit of having a content calendar with information posting automatically is being able to respond in real-time. When there is not a concern over what needs to be posted, there is the freedom to interact with the community, paying attention to what is going on with them and responding to their needs and concerns. Also, this provides an opportunity to read other blogs and articles of interest, and to highlight key influencers and partners, as well as finding helpful information to share with the community.

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[18] See Appendix B for sample 28-Day Content Calendar.

The more strategic the church became with the content that was posted and tweeted, the more interactions and engagement the church received from those inside and outside the doors. Being intentional and strategic with content posting on Twitter provided an opportunity to connect and engage with individuals and businesses within the community that have never stepped foot inside the church.

Being intentional and strategic on Facebook provided an opportunity to care for the community beyond the doors of the church. On a weekly basis individuals will post on their personal Facebook account a note about what happened in worship, how they were struggling and needed prayer, or simply how blessed they felt to be connected with Fairborn UMC. Each week the church receives messages and notifications from individuals who have attended worship or have been impacted by something that was posted online.

Digital and Social media has changed the overall culture of Fairborn UMC. No longer does someone have to wait until Sunday morning to engage with and hear from the church. One can simply turn on their smartphone, tablet, iPad, or computer, and open up their social networks and at some point during the day the church will be there in some capacity. People now engage with the church more so than ever before. Look at the data trends found on pages 164-166 to see the increase in engagement levels before and during the eight-week study.

The online community is as important as the community that physically attends worship each week. What began three years ago with a basic website has grown into daily posts and tweets to Facebook, Twitter and Instagram; uploads of weekly sermons, online Bible studies, and classes to YouTube; and the incorporation of a Live Stream feed

during the contemporary worship service at 11 am each week. The live stream feed has individuals connecting and watching from Afghanistan and Nicaragua, along with other various locations within the United States. Not only can individuals connect with us through social media throughout the week, they also have the opportunity to remain a vital part of the worshiping church body on Sunday morning through the Live Stream. Each week Fairborn UMC reaches thousands of individuals through our online presence.

Post-Script

In looking back over the process, fifteen minutes of fame and fortune were not necessarily achieved, nor did we experience one post or tweet going "viral." However, the entire project helped plant the digital communication seeds into the life of Fairborn UMC, which now has a dynamic and thriving digital and social media ministry that reaches thousands of individuals weekly.

Nevertheless, it needs to be noted that the ability to reach thousands of individuals weekly did not happen immediately. The entire process began three years prior to the study and research; and the intentional focus placed on the entire digital and social media communication strategy began about a year and a half ago. Momentum was slow, and stagnant at times. There were days when failure and giving up seemed like great options. No one appeared to be engaging or interacting with the church via social media, nor were there many paying any attention to our website or live stream worship service.

Then about eleven months ago the ball began to roll, almost as if someone finally turned on the digital switch. Ever since that moment, momentum has increased steadily and with each post and tweet more individuals are reached and engaged. Furthermore, within the last six to eight months we have seen an additional shift occur, what we call a digital crossover.[19]A digital crossover is an individual who found us, or engaged with us online in some manner, and who now have crossed-over from a solely digital connection to someone who participates (both on and off line) within the life of the church on a weekly basis. There are multiple families within the church who fall into the digital crossover category. In addition, this crossover is a vital piece to our digital evangelism efforts that we are now seeing come to fruition.

The current digital and social media communication culture that exists within Fairborn UMC did not exist a year ago. However, had the steps not been taken, or the seeds not been planted, we never would have gotten to this place. As difficult as the journey has been, the fruits of the labor are a beautiful sight. Due to the results of this study we will continue to leverage who we are as a church towards the digital. We will continue to evangelize, communicate, promote and market who we are and who God is online and within the social media sphere.

It is important, though, to be mindful of what Weems quoted Charles Handy stating: "It is one of the paradoxes of success, that the things and ways which got you there are seldom those things that will keep you there."[20] The processes that helped get the social media and digital technology ball rolling will not be the processes that will keep them rolling. The ball will eventually stop, the strategy will need to be adapted and

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[19] See Glossary of Terms for Definition.

[20] Dr. Lovett Weems, xvii.

when it does, we will stop, review, and then revise when necessary. Jesus said, Go into all the world. Never once did Jesus say Go and stop that is good enough. The church is called to "Go" and reach people where they are, regardless of the method and the medium used.

The data noted earlier in this chapter suggests people are craving for interaction, conversation, community and connections. To echo the words of Dr. Seuss, unless the church cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better; it is not. If we choose not to enter the digital world, the restless digital natives will find someone who is already there, speaking the language, and they will begin engaging and connecting with them. Entering the digital and social media world is worth the risk; it is worth our time and energy. Now is the time for the church to leverage who we are in order to create and sustain our digital influence and footprint within the millennial generation, and those generations yet to come.

APPENDIX A

COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY CHANGES FROM 1836–2014

1830's
1836 Morse Code and the Telegraph invented by Samuel Morse

1860's
1867 Typewriter Invented

1870's
1876 Telephone Invented by Alexander Graham Bell

1890's
1890 IBM Punchcard System

1920's
1920 Commercial Radio
1923 Television – New York to Philadelphia
1927 Sound movies (USA)
1928 Regular TV broadcast in US – WGY Schenectady

1930's
1935 FM radio – Armstrong (USA)

1940's
1942 Commercial TV standardized in the US
1946 Electronic Computer – University of Pennsylvania
1947 Transistor (AT&T)
1948 TV increases from 100,000 to 1 million sets in USA

1950's
1950 Cable TV (USA)
1951 Computers are first sold commercially
1954 Regular color TV broadcasts (USA)
1957 Global satellite – "Sputnik" (USSR)

1960's
1960 Integrated circuit chips (USA)
1966 Xerox invents Telecopier (USA)
1969 ARPANET – the first Internet started

1970's
1971 First Email Sent
Microprocessor is developed
1975 Bill Gages and Paul Allen, co-found Microsoft
VCRs are introduced
1976 Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak co-found Apple Company, Inc.
Apple I – home computer invented (USA)

1980's

1980 Operational optical fiber: Boston-Washington
First Online Newspaper (Columbus Dispatch)
CNN, first 24-hour news station, debuts
1981 IBM PC first sold
MTV debuts
1982 CDs are introduced
1983 Computer named "Man of the Year" by Time Magazine
First cellular phone network started in US
1984 Apple Macintosh Released (USA)
1985 Cellular telephones in cars become popular
Microsoft Windows is launched
1989 Compaq laptop computer is launched

1990's

1990 Creation of the World Wide Web by Sir Timothy John Berners-Lee
1991 World Wide Web goes public
1992 First Text Message sent
1995 Microsoft Internet Explorer is launched
The Beginning of Yahoo!
Amazon.com launches online shopping
Launching of Wikipedia
1997 DVDs replace VHS format

2000's

2000 Rise of cell phone use and cellular technology
2001 iPod and MP3 format compressed digital files debut
Instant message services
2002 TV standard changes to digital
2003 iTunes online music store debuts
TiVo, video on demand, debuts
MySpace.com is launched, first major social network
2004 Mark Zukerberg launches Facebook; the largest social network to date.
Google goes public
2005 YouTube is created
2006 Twitter, the micro-blogging social media network, is launched.
2007 Apple, Inc. released the iPod
Apple, Inc. released the iPhone
2008 Apple, Inc. released the App Store
Android Smartphone HTC released
Android Marketplace (Application Store) Released
2009 Blackberry launches App World

2010's

2010 Apple, Inc. released the iPad
Android released Tablets
Instagram app launched giving users ability to edit and post pictures

2012 Google+ is released

2013 Vine app launches giving users ability to post 6 sec. videos,
Instagram app updates to allow posts of 15 sec. videos.
Google+ became second largest social media networking site, ahead of Twitter.

2014 25% of the world's total population uses social media, while three-quarters of the online population use one or more social networking sites.
Facebook turned 10 years old and continues to be the primary social network for businesses, older millennials, and above. [1]

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[1] Sources used for the complete list 1684-2014:

William Fore, *Mythmakers: Gospel, Culture and the Media* (New York, NY: Friendship Press, 1990), 34-35.

"Evolution of Communication," Timetoast, accessed December 22, 2013, http://www.timetoast.com/timelines/evolution-of-communication.

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Anthony Kosner, "Watch out Facebook, With Google
= at #2 and YouTube #3, Google, Inc. Could Catch Up," *Forbes,* accessed December 1, 2014, http://www.forbes.com/sites/anthonykosner/2013/01/26/watch-out-facebook-with-google-at-2-and-youtube-at-3-google-inc-could-catch-up/.

APPENDIX B

28-DAY SAMPLE CONTENT CALENDAR

This is a sample of a generic content calendar for a 28-day period. This is not an exhaustive calendar, as other elements can be plugged in when necessary, such as special holidays, services, promotions, cultural and societal events, etc.

A quick note about posting information about moments of crisis, national holidays/days of remembrance, and societal events, these are all great opportunities to share and support those within the church and community on meaningful or difficult days. For instance, we posted a quick tweet giving suicide hotline numbers and church contacts if anyone needed help or knew someone who was struggling. This tweet and post came within hours of the news regarding the death of actor Robin Williams. To date those posts and tweets remains one of the highest reaching interactions we have had. Secondly, when posting content geared towards holidays, 'crisis', and events, it shows the online community that the church/organization cares for more than just themselves and is in touch with reality and the world around them.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Worship Live Tweet Sunday Recap	Quote/Question Digital Media highlight	Behind the Scenes	Ministry Promo Program Reminder	#TBT Blog or article	Key Influencer	Event Reminder Worship Preview
Worship Live Tweet Youth Reminder	Sunday Recap	Blog or article	Ministry Promo Staff Highlight	#TBT Event Reminder	Community Partner	Worship Preview
Worship Live Tweet Sunday Recap	Event Reminder	Behind the Scenes	Ministry Promo Program Reminder	#TBT Blog or article	Key Influencer	Worship Preview
Worship Live Tweet Youth Reminder	Sunday Recap Digital Media highlight	Blog or article	Ministry Promo Quote/Question	#TBT Staff Highlight	Community Partner	Event Reminder

APPENDIX C

PRE-STUDY OPEN ENDED SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q9 If you answered "no" to question 7, why do you not use social media in worship? [1]

1. I feel like it would be a distraction to my worship 2/12/2014 4:21 PM

2. I don't use it because I don't feel that is an appropriate place to use my phone. It is my time to spend with God. 2/12/2014 7:34 AM

3. If I'm tweeting or composing a post to FB or G+ then I'm not invested in what's happening in worship *right now*. 2/11/2014 10:32 PM

4. No appropriate 2/11/2014 8:55 PM

5. I thought it would be disrespectful to the Pastors. I thought we were supposed to give our devoted attention to the sermon. 2/11/2014 8:52 PM

6. I think it detracts from my listening to the message. 2/11/2014 8:27 PM

7. Have not thought beyond "Easy Worship" words-on-screen media in worship. Worship style maybe not conducive to use of social media in worship setting. 2/11/2014 4:22 PM

8. Because my parents won't let me plus its rude to do so 2/11/2014 4:09 PM

9. It is distracting 2/11/2014 10:15 AM

10. I'm listening to the service. 2/11/2014 9:13 AM

11. I am not into IT much. I don't think in terms of using it. David does use Facebook and he shares information from there about family and friends that I know. I enjoy that. 2/11/2014 6:55 AM

12. I don't attend church 2/11/2014 5:57 AM

[1] Survey Monkey, accessed December 17, 2014, https://www.surveymonkey.com/analyze/ns33A_2FrjReOxpTII_2FbHI79dZfA0wcj_2FRpP7Cs9fB7E8_3D.

13. Well - we live in a relatively remote part of Nepal and electricity is erratic and internet is still fairly slow. We have used videos from youtube as illustrations in sermons sometimes, but other than the youth in the church being on facebook and sometimes posting about services, programs, etc, we don't really make use of social media during the worship hour. 2/11/2014 3:36 AM

14. Worship time belongs to God alone. 2/11/2014 3:25 AM

15. I never think of using it in that way. 2/11/2014 2:01 AM

16. Because you go to church to worship God and to praise him 2/11/2014 12:54 AM

17. I am a traditionalist and enjoy the simple things in life. As a society, we have lost touch with simplicity and have replaced it with better, quicker, faster. A church is a place to connect with God and each other and a time to put the various social media to rest. 2/11/2014 12:12 AM

18. Too busy worshipping to log in 2/10/2014 10:31 PM

19. The people around me in worship would be upset that I was not focusing on the service. However, I have thought about Snap chatting parts of the service to people so they could see what it was like and if they may want to come one day. 2/10/2014 10:30 PM

20. I don't have my phone out during worship. 2/10/2014 10:09 PM

21 Never thought about it...how do you use it without being criticized 2/10/2014 10:04 PM

22. Giving respect to the Pastor who is preaching. I believe in giving 100% attention just as I should during a one on one conversation. I take notes during each sermon. 2/10/2014 9:45 PM

23. I am usually busy helping with A/V during service. I have on one or two occasions posted on Twitter during the service. 2/10/2014 9:34 PM

24. Raised to pay attention during church, have a hard time breaking that habit. Feel that it would be distracting to the preachers. 2/10/2014 9:13 PM

25. It is rude to have your phone out during church. 2/10/2014 9:03 PM

26. It seems rude 2/10/2014 8:47 PM

27. I've tried, but I can't listen and tweet at the same time. ;) Can't do 2 things at once :) 2/10/2014 8:03 PM

28. I don't feel it's appropriate durring my worship service. 2/10/2014 7:52 PM

29. Im not sure... 2/10/2014 7:29 PM

30. I'd rather pay attention to what is going on in the service. 2/10/2014 7:25 PM

31. During the service I am paying attention to the service. Before the service I have used social media to invite friends to join me at the service. 2/10/2014 7:08 PM

32. If by worship you mean singing in church, then I don't use social media during it because it's rude to use my phone in church and disconnects me from the moment of worship. 2/10/2014 7:08 PM

33. I don't do a lot of worship at all 2/10/2014 6:56 PM

34. I do not use social media in worship because it is God's time not mine. I also do not have a mobile device that supports social media. We do use a media projector at the church during the service. 2/10/2014 6:46 PM

35. Respect for the speaker and the message. Before & after = OK 2/10/2014 6:43 PM

36. It would be frowned upon in the Catholic Church I attend. 2/10/2014 6:37 PM

37. Don't know how I'd use it for communication. 2/10/2014 6:24 PM

38. Always thought it wasn't appropriate 2/10/2014 6:23 PM

39. I never really thought about using social media in worship 2/10/2014 6:21 PM

40. Would seem distracting... 2/10/2014 5:51 PM

41. I may be old fashioned, but I still find it rude to be texting or doing anything else to distract your attention when you are talking to someone or in a situation where your attention is expected (like worship or a concert). 2/10/2014 5:50 PM

42. I feel that it's disrespectful to be on social media during worship service. Even if you're saying something positive about the service, it takes your attention away from the message. 2/10/2014 5:45 PM

43. No reason to. I'm listening to preacher and partaking in communion 2/10/2014 5:36 PM

44. It would be on my phone and it is not as easy to read. 2/10/2014 5:31 PM

45. I am paying attend to real people in person to build relationships with them and God. I may post something about church afterward, but not during worship. 2/10/2014 5:24 PM

46. Do not use in Church, nor do I use when doing worship at home, like in reading the Bible or my Daily worship books. Maybe I don't really understand the question. 2/10/2014 5:20 PM

47. Assuming worship implies the music portion of the service, using social media would distract me from the purpose of worshiping God. If my intent is to worship and praise God during that time, accessing social media would not help me achieve that goal. 2/10/2014 5:05 PM

48. Not in the habit of doing so. 2/10/2014 5:02 PM

49. Because u should be focusing on the sermon not all the post of my friends breakfast plates. 2/10/2014 4:59 PM

50. I didn't know it was available 2/10/2014 4:54 PM

51. Accompany the choir. 2/10/2014 4:54 PM

52. I don't have a smart phone. 2/10/2014 4:43 PM

53. Having a device out during a service would be disrespectful. 2/10/2014 4:36 PM

54. I'm worshipping God, not chatting on Facebook! 2/10/2014 4:32 PM

55. Lack of access. I'm afraid I would be more distracted by what others not in worship are posting. Don't want to replace analog relationships with digital ones. 2/10/2014 4:30 PM

56. Lack of equipment in church, and not enough Facebook or Twitter followers. 2/10/2014 4:21 PM

57. Socially It is disrespectful. Also, it completely defeats the point of worship. You are there to set aside time to worship God, you can't save the social networking for later? If you're not going to take learning more about God's word seriously, then what is the point of going to a worship service? 2/10/2014 4:11 PM

58. Use my own bible..... 2/10/2014 4:10 PM

59. I'm paying attention to the service (and my kids). 2/10/2014 4:00 PM

60. I answered question 6 2/10/2014 3:59 PM

61. Because I try to listen. 2/10/2014 3:58 PM

62. I don't want to take away my attention from the message 2/10/2014 3:48 PM

63. No need to 2/10/2014 3:41 PM

APPENDIX D

POST-STUDY OPEN ENDED SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q6. If yes, why did you choose to participate in the study? [1]

1. Because it seemed like a lot of fun 8/8/2014 3:56 PM

2. You asked me 6/22/2014 9:18 PM

3. Wanted to help you with your study 6/18/2014 8:45 PM

4. Interesting topic of study. 6/18/2014 3:56 PM

5. I want to support Megan, and I think the use of media in our worship service has enhanced it, especially for the younger people. 6/18/2014 8:01 AM

6. Meghan is awesome 6/18/2014 12:52 AM

7. My hot wife 6/17/2014 10:42 PM

8. FUMC is the first and only church I have ever attended that encourages social media during worship. I think it is a great way to stay in touch with your church and to stay relevant. So I def wanted to participate. 6/17/2014 5:10 PM

9. It's fascinating to post memorable things about the message and/or service and to read what others thought was important. 6/16/2014 5:43 PM

10. Just to help out. 6/16/2014 3:14 PM

11. Enjoy social media and like to participate in research 6/16/2014 3:00 PM

12. I thought it would be interesting. 6/16/2014 2:42 PM

13. To help out the researcher 6/16/2014 12:51 PM

14. Thought it sounded fun 6/16/2014 12:50 PM

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[1] Post-Test Survey. Survey Monkey, accessed December 17, 2014, https://www.surveymonkey.com/analyze/tlIen3tarFny73Hfg0G91DWjYLNvBbJTbqK6TTueBlU_3D.

Q11. Was your ability to focus in worship affected, positively or negatively, by your activity level on social media? Please Explain.

1. Positively because it helped me interact with other members of the church as well 8/8/2014 3:57 PM

2. Positively 6/22/2014 9:18 PM

3. I was still able to focus but now I try to pick out something said that I can share with my friends on Facebook each week 6/18/2014 8:46 PM

4. It heightened my attention and thought process as a result of broadcasting to a larger audience. 6/18/2014 3:57 PM

5. I think I misunderstood what social media is. I was thinking it was the videos, slides, etc. used during worship. I do not participate in the other social media. 6/18/2014 8:02 AM

6. Positively. I do.feel like I might miss something when I am typing but I am more focused. 6/18/2014 12:56 AM

7. It helped with retention of topic and bible verse. 6/17/2014 10:43 PM

8. Affected positively. I initially thought I would be distracted but just the opposite occurred. 6/17/2014 5:13 PM

9. A little but only because I don't type as fast on my phone as others do. It wasn't enough to make me stop doing it though 6/16/2014 5:45 PM

10. I felt like I missed things while posting. 6/16/2014 3:15 PM

11. Sometimes I felt that I was missing part of the service while I was focusing on taking a picture/post on my social media accounts. 6/16/2014 3:03 PM

12. Positively 6/16/2014 2:43 PM

13. Positively 6/16/2014 12:51 PM

14. Positively [sic] for the most part. 6/16/2014 12:51 PM

Q12. Did your use of social media in worship deepen the way in which you experience God? Please Explain.

1. Its like taking notes during worship 6/22/2014 9:18 PM

2. I can go back and look at my tweets as notes and I can see what others picked up that I may have missed or what they found important. 6/18/2014 12:56 AM

3. Because I think carefully about what I'm going to post which in turn makes me reflect more on the message. 6/17/2014 5:13 PM

4. Typing out the comments that I thought were important really helped drive those points home in my memory. 6/16/2014 5:45 PM

5. I felt I missed things and was concentrating on social media instead of preaching. 6/16/2014 3:15 PM

6. It was another way to add to my worship 6/16/2014 3:03 PM

7. It just helped me focus 6/16/2014 2:43 PM

8. Images often help me see things differently 6/16/2014 12:51 PM

Q16. If yes, what made it beneficial in your opinion?

1. Being young it's nice to have some modern things in the service 8/8/2014 3:58 PM

2. It was good to think in pictures 6/22/2014 9:20 PM

3. I took better notes to be able to share with Others 6/18/2014 8:48 PM

4. Provided an intentional forum to spread the word of God rather thank just "keeping" the message for me alone. 6/18/2014 3:59 PM

5. More engaged. 6/18/2014 12:59 AM

6. My hot wife 6/17/2014 10:45 PM

7. Being encouraged to use social media during worship is def thinking outside the box. It makes me feel closer to God, my church and my friends who attend. 6/17/2014 5:20 PM

8. It made me think of the points made on a deeper level than just sitting and listening. 6/16/2014 5:48 PM

9. A way to augment my worship 6/16/2014 3:05 PM

10. It helped me focus 6/16/2014 2:44 PM

11. I could see notes I have taken, images help me experience scripture better 6/16/2014 12:53 PM

12. Helped me focus on what was being said 6/16/2014 12:52 PM

Q18. Is there any additional insight you can provide, based from your experience, that could aid this research?

1. Nothing really 8/8/2014 3:58 PM

2. It would be interesting to think about how to have interactive tweeting during service. 6/22/2014 9:20 PM

3. No 6/18/2014 8:48 PM

4. No. 6/18/2014 3:59 PM

5. No. 6/18/2014 8:03 AM

6. Would help even more if more people were involved and the speaker tweeted during the sermon. 6/18/2014 12:59 AM

7. My hot wife 6/17/2014 10:45 PM

8. In my opinion, we live in a world where less and less people are attending church. The only way for a church to stay relevant is to embrace new technology not discourage it. Too much tradition will only lead to an empty church in my opinion. 6/17/2014 5:20 PM

9. No. 6/16/2014 5:48 PM

10. N/a 6/16/2014 3:05 PM

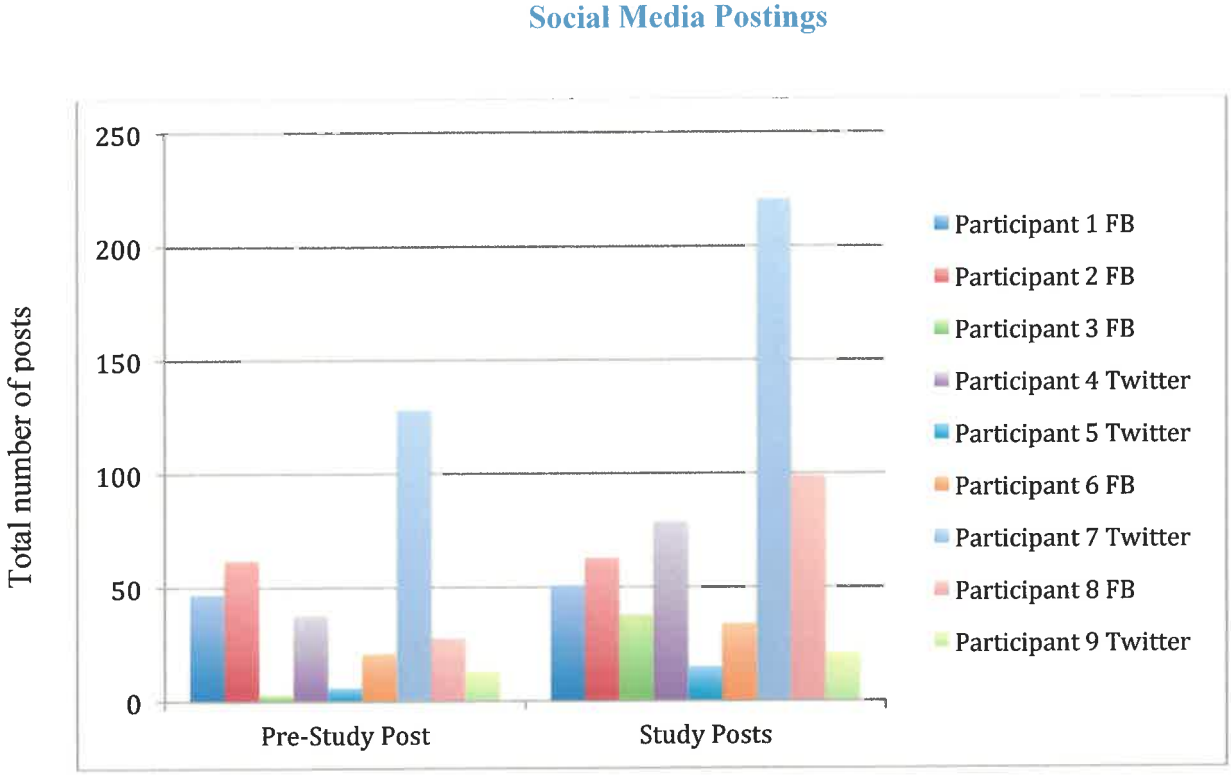
11. N/a 6/16/2014 2:44 PM

12. No 6/16/2014 12:53 PM

13. None 6/16/2014 12:52 PM

APPENDIX E

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS



Posts and Tweets from both Pre-Study 8-week period and During the 8-Week Study. Factors taken into consideration when looking at what posts and tweets to include were posts mentioning: Church, worship, faith, God, feeling blessed, scripture, prayer, and events or activities involving church.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Facebook and Twitter: Reach, Engagement, Impressions

Twitter

Figure 21 Pre-Study Tweets

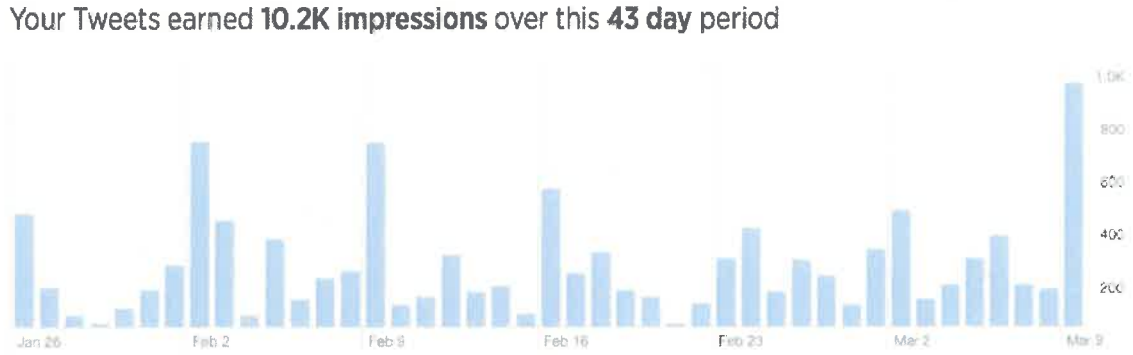


Figure 22 During 8-Week Study Tweets

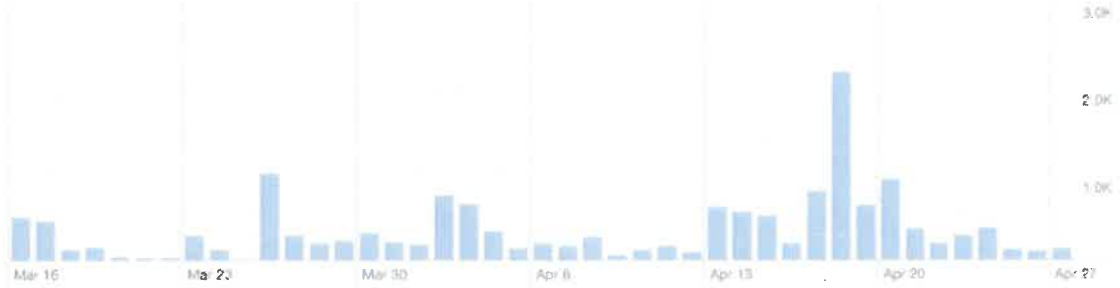


Figure 23 Previous 8 weeks before study

Figure 24 During 8-week study

Facebook

Figure 25 Total Reach Previous 8 Weeks Before Study

Total Reach
The number of people who were served any activity from your Page including posts, posts by other people, Page like ads, mentions and checkins.
Organic
Paid
BENCHMARK
Compare your average performance over time
Organic
Paid

Figure 26 Total Reach During 8 Weeks Study

Total Reach
The number of people who were served any activity from your Page including posts, posts by other people, Page like ads, mentions and checkins.
Organic
Paid
BENCHMARK
Compare your average performance over time
Organic
Paid

Figure 27 Likes, Comments and Shares Previous 8 Weeks Before Study

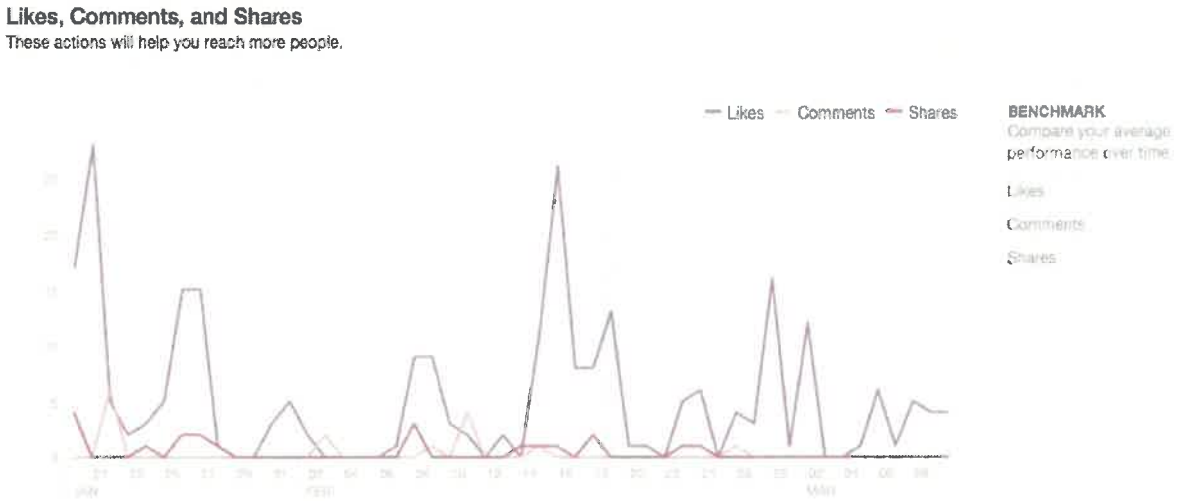
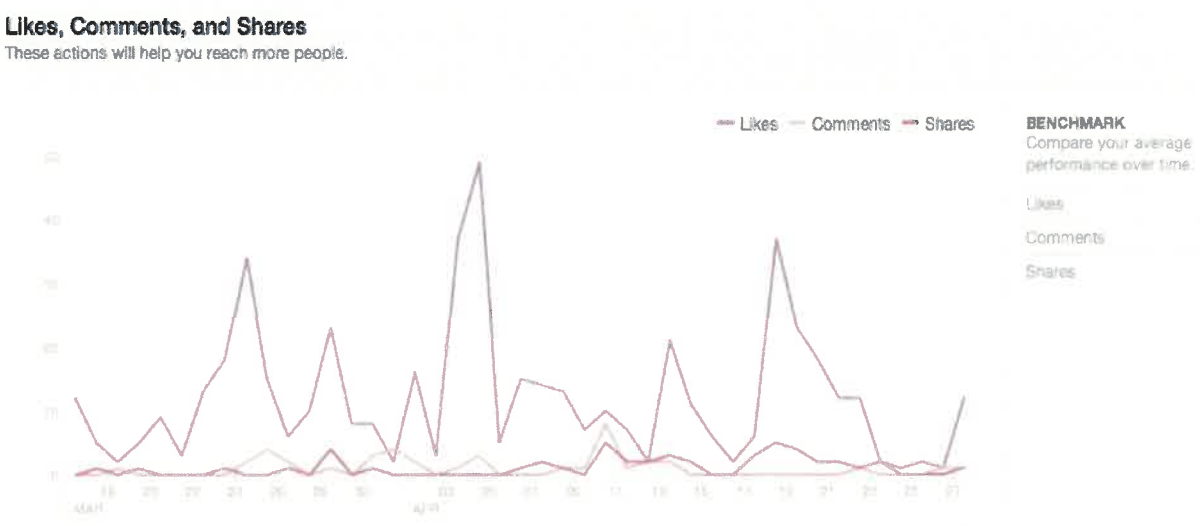


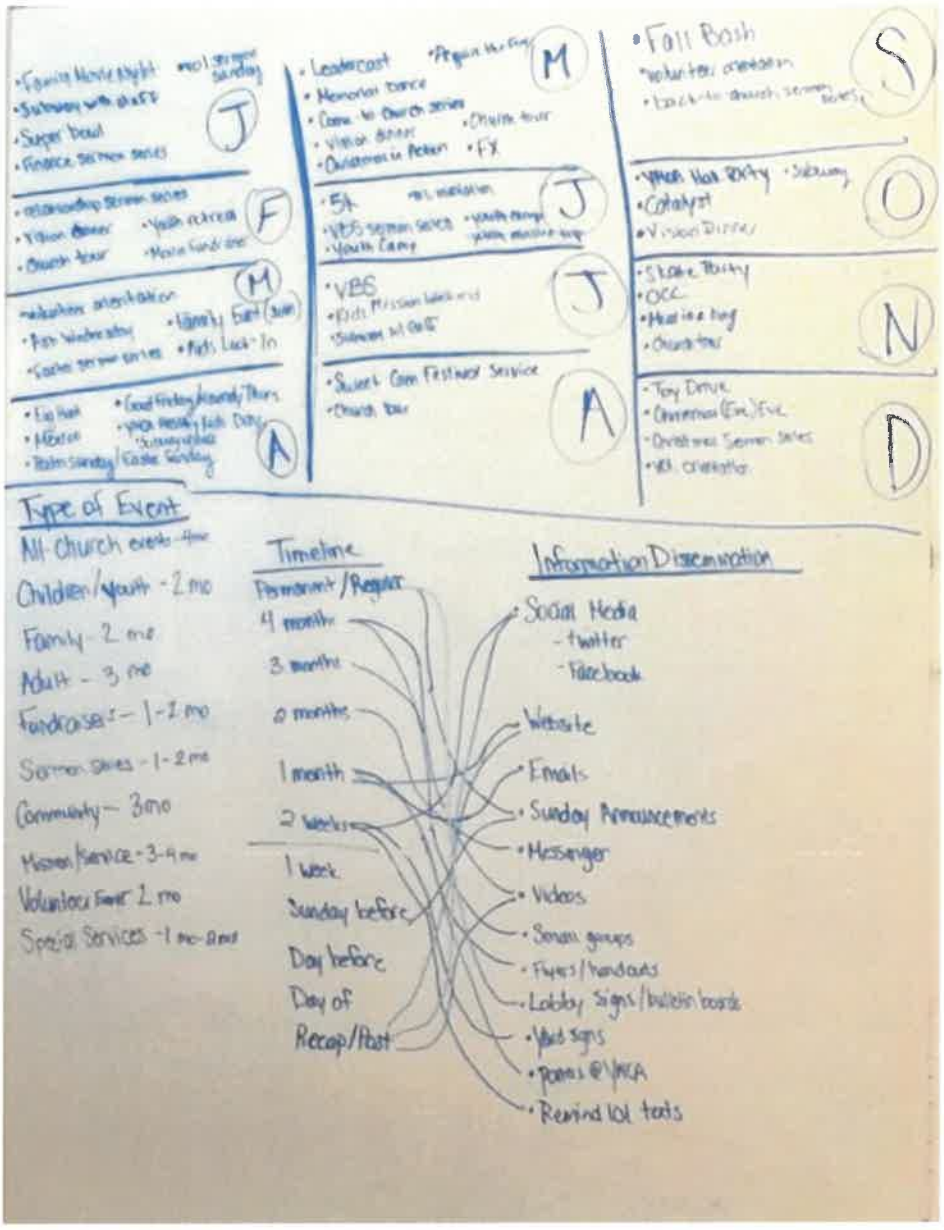
Figure 28 Likes, Comments and Shares During 8-Week Study



Digital and Social Media Strategy

This chart also had additional areas of marketing and promotions, however its primary use was for digital and social media

Figure 29



Sample Facebook and Twitter Posts

Facebook: Posts

Figure 30 displays a single image with a quick reminder of an upcoming event with #hashtag designations

Figure 30

Fairborn United Methodist Church
Posted by Meghan Howard [?] - April 11
This is happening Sunday at 10:45! #BeThere #WithUs2014
EASTER
EGG HUNT

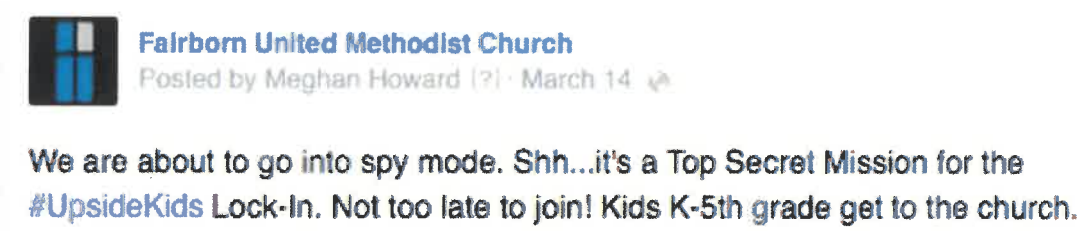
Figure 31 displays a text-based post with a video link to another social media site.

Figure 31

Fairborn United Methodist Church shared a link.
Posted by Meghan Howard [?] - April 11
"Jesus will sift through the ashes for you, because God is relentless in His pursuit of what is lost." Meghan Howard.
Check out the latest message in the CSI: Empty Tomb Series.
http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=Eamgu2xbmh0&feature=youtu.be
C.S.I.: The Empty Tomb part 5

Figure 32 displays a simple text-based post explaining about an upcoming event. The post also used the #hashtag designation providing a searchable connection.

Figure 32


Fairborn United Methodist Church
Posted by Meghan Howard [?] · March 14
We are about to go into spy mode. Shh...it's a Top Secret Mission for the #UpsideKids Lock-In. Not too late to join! Kids K-5th grade get to the church.

Twitter: Tweets

Figure 32 displays a simple text-based tweet. This tweet took place during the live-tweeting of worship. Tweet was less than the 140 character maximum giving individuals the opportunity to quote the tweet in retweet. Leaving room for others to quote the tweet or add in their comments is not necessary, but helpful. The tweet also has a #hashtag designation allowing for categorization and search options.

Figure 33

Fairborn UMC
@FairbornUMC
Follow
Do we give God permission to mess with our lives? #Emptytomb14
11:33 AM - 16 Mar 2014
2 RETWEETS 2 FAVORITES

Figure 34 displays an image along with a text-based tweet directing individuals to click the link to sign-up for the challenge. Once again the tweet has a #hashtag designation linking post with a wider search option and category.

Figure 34

2014 Mission Madness Bracket Challenge
Fairborn UMC
@FairbornUMC
Follow
#MissionMadness Bracket Challenge is open until tomorrow at 9am. Choose wisely! Click here --> ow.ly/uJjPo
6:09 PM - 19 Mar 2014
1 RETWEET 1 FAVORITE

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

A

Analytics - Analytics tells you what happened. In general, it involves using technology to gather data which analysts can study. The goal of analysts is to examine this data, looking for patterns in behavior. The most common way of gathering data is using a tracking tag on a website or software application. The tag registers a "session" when a user visits and then stores data about what pages they visited, what actions they completed, and how they interacted with different elements such as clicking on buttons or performing a search.[1]

C

Case Study – are a design of inquiry found in many fields, especially evaluation, in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Cases are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time.[2]

Comment - A comment is a response that is often provided as an answer or reaction to a blog post or message on a social network. Comments are a primary form of two-way communication on the social web.[3]

Content Curation - Content Curation is the process of sifting through the web to find the best and most relevant content for an audience and then presenting it to them in a meaningful way. Unlike content marketing, Content Curation doesn't involve publishing new content. Instead, it's about creating value for your audience by saving them time and effort. There's no shortage of content out there, but not all of it is worth reading. Plus, there's no guarantee that the best articles, videos, and infographics will show up on the first page of a Google search. Organizing related content into pinboards, newsletters, or weekly blog posts can help you build a regular audience and also demonstrate your subject expertise.

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[1] Matt Fougler, *The 2014 Social Media Glossary: 154 Essential Definitions,* Hootsuite Social Media Glossary Blog, accessed December 16, 2014, http://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-managers-definitive-glossary-2014/.

[2] John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches, 4th Edition* (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2014), 14.

[3] Kipp Bodnar, *The Ultimate Glossary: 120 Social Media Marketing Terms Explained,* Hubspot Blogs, accessed December 6, 2014, http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/6126/The-Ultimate-Glossary-120-Social-Media-Marketing-Terms-Explained.aspx.

D

Digital Immigrant – Someone born outside of the primary digital age and who has adapted and learned digital ways and methods.[4]

Digital Native – Someone who has grown up digital and does not know a world without digital devices.[5]

E

Engagement – Social media engagement refers to the acts of talking to, messaging or otherwise interacting with other people on social networks. This broad term encompasses a several different types of actions on social media, from commenting on Facebook posts to participating in Twitter chats. At its simplest, social media engagement is any interaction you have with other users. For that reason, it's a core part of every social media strategy. Your followers expect your to interact with them. Being social is core to social media, after all.[6]

Engagement Rate - Engagement rate is the percentage of people who saw your social media post and actively engaged with it (clicked the link, expanded the image attached, replied, liked, favorited, shared, Retweeted, etc). Engagement rate is a valuable metric to help determine the quality and success of your social media messaging, as it provides an indicator as to how interesting or useful the message was to your audience. Twitter Analytics provides in-depth engagement rate data for every Tweet you send.[7]

Ethnography – is a design of inquiry coming from anthropology and sociology in which the researcher studies the shared patterns of behavior, language, and actions of intact cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged period of time. Data collection often involves observations and interviews.[8]

Evangelism – The proclamation of the Gospel message.

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[4] Marc Prensky, "On the Horizon," *MCB University Press*, Vol. 9 No. 5, (October 2001), accessed December 17, 2014, http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky%20.

[5] Ibid, 2.

[6] Matt Fougler, "The 2014 Social Media Glossary: 154 Essential Definitions," *Hootsuite Social Media Glossary Blog*, accessed December 16, 2014, http://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-managers-definitive-glossary-2014/.

[7] Ibid.

[8] John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches, 4th Edition* (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2014), 14.

F

Facebook - Your Facebook Network is the web of people with whom you are friends on Facebook. The term expresses the inherent sense of connectivity users experience on the Facebook platform, where a web of updates and information are delivered to you from all the people in your life.[9]

Facebook Reach - The number of unique people who have seen content from your Facebook Page. Reach is not the same as impressions, which is the total number of times your content is viewed (including multiple views from the same user). Facebook provides two different reach metrics: total reach and post reach.[10]

- **Total reach** - is the number of unique people who have seen any content associated with your Page during the last 7 days. This includes people who view your Page posts, people who visit your Page after searching for it, and people who see ads that are associated with your Page.

- **Post reach** - is the number of unique people who have seen a particular Facebook Page post in their News Feed.[11]

Facebook Fans – The people who like your Facebook Page.[12]

Feed - A shortened version of a web document that shows only the most recent updates. Used on social networks to display the most recent updates made to your profile.[13]

Follower - A Twitter user who has subscribed to your Twitter account so they can receive your Tweets in their Home feed. If you want to send them a direct message, you need to follow them back.[14]

Following - The number of accounts that a Twitter handle is following.

Follows - The number of accounts that are following a Twitter handle.[15]

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[9] Matt Fougler, "The 2014 Social Media Glossary: 154 Essential Definitions," *Hootsuite Social Media Glossary Blog*, accessed December 16, 2014, http://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-managers-definitive-glossary-2014/.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Powell, Juliette (2010-05-17), A Short Social Media Glossary (Kindle Locations 30-31). Pearson Education. Kindle Edition.

[14] Matt Fougler, "The 2014 Social Media Glossary: 154 Essential Definitions."

[15] Ibid.

Friends - No, not your pals you play poker with on the weekends. We're talking Facebook friends. These are individuals you consider to be friendly enough with you to see your Facebook profile and engage with you.[16]

G

Google+ - Google+ is Google's new social network. It differs in that it promotes social sharing that is more similar to how people share in real life by providing features such as one that limits who you are talking to, creating 1-on-1 conversation.[17]

H

Hashtag - A hashtag is a tag used on the social network Twitter as a way to annotate a message. A hashtag is a word or phrase preceded by a "#." Example: #yourhashtag. Hashtags are commonly used to show that a tweet, a Twitter message, is related to an event or conference, online or offline.[18]

I

Impression – The number of times an ad, sponsored update, or promoted post is displayed. [19]

Influencer - A social media user who can reach a significant audience and drive awareness about a trend, topic, company, or product. From a marketer's perspective, the ideal influencer is also a passionate brand advocate. However, influencers often try to remain impartial toward brands in order to maintain credibility with their hard-earned audiences. Successful influencer strategies usually involve the coordination of Marketing, Customer Service, and Public Relations teams.[20]

Infographic – A visual image such as a chart or diagram used to represent information or data[21]

Instagram - Instagram is a photo sharing application that lets users take photos, apply

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[16] Kipp Bodnar, "The Ultimate Glossary: 120 Social Media Marketing Terms Explained," *Hubspot Blogs*, Created December 30, 2011, accessed December 6, 2014, http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/6126/The-Ultimate-Glossary-120-Social-Media-Marketing-Terms-Explained.aspx.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Matt Fougler, "The 2014 Social Media Glossary: 154 Essential Definitions."

[20] Ibid.

[21] Infographic Definition, *Oxford Dictionaries, a*ccessed December 16, 2014, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/infographic.

filters to their images, and share the photos instantly on the Instagram network and other social networks like Facebook, Flickr, Twitter, and Foursquare. The app is targeted toward mobile social sharing, and in just over one year, it has gained almost 15 million users. Currently, it is only available for iPhone devices.[22]

L

Like - A "Like" is an action that can be made by a Facebook user. Instead of writing a comment for a message or a status update, a Facebook user can click the "Like" button as a quick way to show approval and share the message.[23]

LinkedIn - LinkedIn is a business-oriented social networking site. Founded in December 2002 and launched in May 2003, it is mainly used for professional networking. As of June 2010, LinkedIn had more than 70 million registered users, spanning more than 200 countries and territories worldwide.[24]

M

Mention – The act of tagging another user's handle or account name in a social media message. Mentions typically trigger a notification for that user and are a key part of what makes social media "social". When properly formatted (for example, as an @mention on Twitter or +mention on Google+), a mention also allows your audience to click through to the mentioned users' bio or profile.[25]

Millennials – The generation of individuals born between 1980-2000.

Mixed Methods Research – is an approach to inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data, and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks. The core assumption of this form of inquiry is that the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a more complete understanding of a research problem than either approach alone.

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[22] Kipp Bodnar, "The Ultimate Glossary: 120 Social Media Marketing Terms Explained," *Hubspot Blogs*, accessed December 6, 2014, http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/6126/The-Ultimate-Glossary-120-Social-Media-Marketing-Terms-Explained.aspx.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Matt Fougler, "The 2014 Social Media Glossary: 154 Essential Definitions."

MySpace - MySpace is a social networking website owned by News Corporation. MySpace became the most popular social networking site in the United States in June 2006 and was overtaken internationally by its main competitor, Facebook, in April 2008.[26]

N

News Feed - A news feed is literally a feed full of news. On Facebook, the News Feed is the homepage of users' accounts where they can see all the latest updates from their friends. The news feed on Twitter is called Timeline (not to get confused with Facebook's new look, also called Timeline).[27]

O

Organic Reach – Is free reach. It refers to the number of unique people who saw your content without your having to pay for it. The vast majority of organic reach occurs when Facebook's algorithm places your posts in the News Feeds of your fans.[28]

P

Paid Reach - is not free reach. It refers to the number of unique people who saw your content because you paid for promoted posts or display ads.[29]

Performance Criticism –

- **Reframes the biblical materials in the context of oral/scribal cultures** of Judaism and early Christianity, aspects of which include the performance event, performer, audience, context, and text.
- **Embraces many methods**, including Historical Criticism, Narrative Criticism, Form and Genre Criticism, Reader-Response Criticism, Rhetorical Criticism, Textual Criticism, Orality Criticism, Speech Act Theory, Social-Science Criticism, Linguistic Criticism, The Art of Translation, Ideological Criticism, Theater Studies, and Oral Interpretation Studies.
- **Constructs scenarios of ancient performances**.
- **Learns from contemporary performances of these materials** through the translation, preparation, and performance of a text for group discussion of the performance event.
- **Reinterprets biblical materials accordingly**.[30]

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[26] Matt Fougler, "The 2014 Social Media Glossary: 154 Essential Definitions."

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

[30] David Rhoads, "What is Performance Criticism?," accessed December 16, 2014, http://www.biblicalperformancecriticism.org/index.php/component/content/article?id=12:what-is-performance-criticism&catid=3.

Post - A Facebook status update, or an item on a blog or forum.[31]

Printing Press – The movable-type machine designed and created by Johannes Gutenberg in the fifteenth century.

Protestant Reformation - "the 16th-century religious, political, intellectual and cultural upheaval that splintered Catholic Europe, setting in place the structures and beliefs that would define the continent in the modern era."[32]

Q

Qualitative Research – is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building rom particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. The final written report has a flexible structure. Those who engage in this form of inquiry support a way of looking at research that honors an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of rendering the complexity of a situation.[33]

Quantitative Research – is an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables, in turn, can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedures. The final written report has a set structure consisting of introduction, literature and theory, methods, results, and discussion. Like qualitative researchers, those who engage in this form of inquiry have assumptions about testing theories deductively, building in protections against bias, controlling for alternative explanations, and being able to generalize and replicate the findings.[34]

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[31] Matt Fougler, "The 2014 Social Media Glossary: 154 Essential Definitions," *Hootsuite Social Media Glossary Blog,* Created October 2014, accessed December 16, 2014, http://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-managers-definitive-glossary-2014/.

[32] History.com Staff, "The Reformation," *History.com,* Created 2002, accessed December 16, 2014, http://www.history.com/topics/reformation.

[33] John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches, 4th Edition* (Los Angelas: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2014), 4.

[34] Ibid.

R

Reach - Reach is a data metric that determines the potential size of audience any given message could reach. It does not mean that that entire audience will see your social media post, but rather tells you the maximum amount of people your post could potentially reach. Reach is determined by a fairly complex calculation, that includes # of followers, shares and impressions as well as net follower increase over time. Reach should not be confused with Impressions or Engagement.[35]

Retweet - A retweet is when someone on Twitter sees your message and decides to re-share it with his/her followers. A retweet button allows them to quickly resend the message with attribution to the original sharer's name.[36]

S

Social Media - Social media is media designed to be disseminated through social interaction, created using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques.[37]

Social Network: Classically refers to a community in which individuals are somehow connected (through friendship, values, working relationships, ideas, etc).[38]

Sound Map - The sound map is a visual arrangement of biblical texts that indicates the texts' units of sound. Those sound units consist of three elements: the cola (the overall number of words said in a single breath); a period (the unit of sound composed of more than one cola); and the overall episode (the inferred larger unit of two or more periods with characteristic marks of beginnings and endings)[39].

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[35] Matt Fougler, "The 2014 Social Media Glossary: 154 Essential Definitions," *Hootsuite Social Media Glossary Blog,* Created October 2014, accessed December 16, 2014, http://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-managers-definitive-glossary-2014/.

[36]Kipp Bodnar, "The Ultimate Glossary: 120 Social Media Marketing Terms Explained," *Hubspot Blogs*, Created December 30, 2011, accessed December 6, 2014, http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/6126/The-Ultimate-Glossary-120-Social-Media-Marketing-Terms-Explained.aspx.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Juliette Powell, *A Short Social Media Glossary* (Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education, 2010), Kindle Location 61-62.

[39] Notes from Dr. Tom Boomershine, United Theological Seminary, May, 2013.

T

Tag: (n.) A keyword or term assigned to a website, post, or other piece of information that describes the content it contains.[40]

TED: Stands for the Technology, Entertainment and Design Conference. An annual invitation-only gathering bringing together some of the world's leading entrepreneurs.[41]

Throwback Thursday (#tbt) - A weekly social media tradition in which people make Instagram a little less instant. Although Throwback Thursday wasn't invented on Instagram, the term has been widely popularized by the platform. Essentially, every Thursday users post either a *really* old photograph of themselves (as a child, in high school, etc) or a saved photo they took more recently but want to share because it's just that good. The next time you go camping and take lots of amazing photos, hold off on spamming your followers with all of them at once. Just save them for later and #tbt every Thursday to your heart's content.[42]

Traffic: The amount of data transferred through the Internet. Used more specifically to refer to the amount of users to a given website.[43]

Trending - A topic or hashtag that is popular on social media at a given moment. Trends are highlighted by social networks such as Twitter and Facebook to encourage discussion and engagement among their users. The "trending" concept was first popularized by Twitter and has since been adopted by Facebook, Google+, and other networks. The trends that you see on Twitter and Facebook are personalized for you, based on your location as well as who you follow or what pages you like.[44]

Tweet - An update sent out via Twitter[45]

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[40] Juliette Powell, *A Short Social Media Glossary* (Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education, 2010), Kindle Location 68-69.

[41] Ibid, 70-71.

[42] Matt Fougler, "The 2014 Social Media Glossary: 154 Essential Definitions," *Hootsuite Social Media Glossary Blog,* Created October 2014, accessed December 16, 2014, http://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-managers-definitive-glossary-2014/.

[43] Juliette Powell, *A Short Social Media Glossary* (Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education, 2010), Kindle Location 73-74.

[44] Matt Fougler, "The 2014 Social Media Glossary: 154 Essential Definitions," *Hootsuite Social Media Glossary Blog,* Created October 2014, accessed December 16, 2014, http://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-managers-definitive-glossary-2014/.

[45] Juliette Powell, *A Short Social Media Glossary* (Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education, 2010), Kindle Location 77-78.

Twitter - A social network and microblogging service popular among heavy users of technology in which frequent updates are posted using mobile devices.[46]

Y

YouTube - A social network featuring shared video content.[47]

[46] Ibid., 79-80.

[47] Ibid., 97-98.

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